The CARPENTER PROPHET

by CHARLES W. PEARSON

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The Carpenter Prophet

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A LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST
AND A DISCUSSION
OF HIS IDEALS

BY

CHARLES WILLIAM PEARSON

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PREFACE

It is to me a deep satisfaction that I have been able to complete this work, which I venture to affirm has been written with a sincere desire to promote truth and righteousness and with patient solicitude as to facts and expression, although it is evident to me that in the nature of the case it is but tentative and initial. There are probably many errors in detail and many instances of wrong emphasis and wrong shading, and, for the sake of brevity, much has been omitted. Yet it is, I hope, a step in the right direction, the beginning of a line of investigation which others may continue.

The argument of this book is that all the superhuman powers attributed to Jesus, whether by the enthusiasm of disciples, by the imagination of poets, or by the self-interest of priests, are untrue, and if they are untrue it follows as a matter of course that they are hurtful. God is the God of truth and man becomes godlike in proportion as he knows and obeys the truth.

Much that is true and helpful about Jesus

has not yet been said, or at least has not been said simply and unprofessionally and in the light of recent study and investigation. The gospel lives can never lose their unique charm and pre-eminence, yet they are written from a point of view so different from our own as often to be unintelligible and even misleading. The gospels were written in an age of intense supernaturalism. Their authors lived in a world as full of angels and devils as of human beings, a world of imagination and miracle, totally unlike the modern world of scientific observation and psychological analysis.

My aim is to discard all purely Jewish conceptions and all the traditions and conventions of Christian theologians and reverently but frankly to study "the man Christ Jesus." My sympathy and fellowship are with those by whatever name they are called, who love and admire and try to imitate Jesus Christ, and I have only pity and sorrow for those who are hostile to his spirit, if any such persons there are. There may be such, but it has never been my ill-fortune to meet them. Opponents of the corruptions and abuses of the church, men who scorn it for its unbelief and hypocrisy, men who deride the theological caricatures of the historic Christ, are

numerous enough. But there are none who do not admire him who taught and exemplified the Golden Rule, who antagonized every wrong and promoted every right, who did good to all to the utmost of his power, who forgave his enemies, and to crown all sealed the sincerity of a noble life by a patient and heroic death. The true Christ all men admire, but alas! the true Christ is hidden from many by veils of ritual and clouds of controversy.

Physical science has in a century revolutionized the world; and moral science, if it were cultivated with the same fidelity and care, could produce even greater results, for moral are stronger than physical forces. If, instead of the careless assumptions and vague rhetorical declamations of the pulpit, we could have accurate and thorough teaching in religion and morals; if, like men of science, clergymen should keep silence till they had something definite to say, and should then, after careful examination of every phase of the question, present their conclusions with scientific caution and thoroughness, the pulpit would again command a serious hearing. At present, unpleasant as it is to say it, a clergyman's utterances are very lightly regarded. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that when Paul

preached at Ephesus, "Many of those who used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men." If we could have a similar bonfire of all the text-books of systematic theology and all the sermons based upon them, there would be as great a relative gain to-day as when the work of God as preached by Paul "mightily grew and prevailed."

But perhaps the preacher will say, "I don't any longer preach the infallibility of the Bible, or the Fall, or the historic truth of the Book of Daniel, or demoniacal possession, or other errors." On the contrary, silence gives assent. You must take sides. He that is not with a debated truth is against it. Every time a preacher praises honesty and courage and zeal in behalf of truth, he by implication claims these qualities for himself, claims that he is not evading or sophisticating, not "handling the word of God deceitfully," but is striving to declare faithfully "the whole counsel of God" as he understands it. You cannot evade the issue. You must choose between a view that harmonizes with every known truth and a view that opposes every truth in every field of knowledge.

My appeal to ministerial readers is this:

If you are so constituted or have been so

educated that these views seem to you absolutely unreasonable and impossible, it is your plain duty to reject them. But if you have a suspicion that they are true, if the question seems to you a fairly debatable one, is it not most important to the integrity of your mind and heart that you look into it? Can there be a greater condemnation than to reject accessible and offered light, to close your eyes and to say, "No matter what the truth is, I will not accept it"?

I wish to undermine no man's faith. If he has no difficulties and desires no further knowledge, I have nothing to say to him; but if he feels perplexed and dissatisfied, if current explanations seem superficial and evasive, this book will perhaps help him to see more clearly. Above all I wish to destroy no man's hope, but to substitute a larger and happier view of life for the narrow and gloomy one of "orthodox" theology.

For the theological fiction of an omnipotent God incarnate I wish to substitute the inspiring truth of a heroic man pressing on to a great end in spite of every weakness and temptation that besets humanity.

The Carpenter Prophet

CHAPTER I

THE GOSPELS

It is necessary in basing a study of the genius and character of Jesus upon the gospels to establish some principle by which to select what is trustworthy from the mass of inconsistent and incredible statements. Every biographer or historian is compelled thus to sift the body of contemporary opinion and conjecture and the eulogies and invectives based on these early traditions. A writer, whether a biographer, novelist or poet, must seize some principle of unity and make his representation consistent with itself. Tennyson, for instance, has ignored all the traditions derogatory to King Arthur, and has based his portraiture on the words of Joseph of Exeter, *Flos regum Arthurus*, Arthur, the flower of kings. He could not make the same man an Arthur and a Lancelot, for the types are contradictory and exclude each other.

There is a dominant motive, a ruling tendency, in every character by which alone it can be interpreted. This does not mean that good men do not fall into sin or that bad men have no redeeming qualities, but it does mean that there are limits to the fluctuation of character, because "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"; and, in spite of apparently capricious and perplexing variations, the outward life must be an expression of the inner spirit. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In the case of Jesus the question for determination is whether he is to be considered as living a human life "tempted in all points as we are" and helped to resist temptation as we are by the grace of God, or whether he was a God in disguise consciously possessed of infinite knowledge, power, and sovereignty. Evangelical preachers waver very curiously between these inconsistent opinions. They point us to the unworldliness of Jesus as he rejects the kingdoms of this world, but what possible temptation could the empty and transient rulership of this world be to the Lord of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. To be a real temptation it must

be addressed to a real man. A millionaire who has left his pocketbook at home and is for the moment penniless in a large city, but can go to the nearest telegraph or telephone office and call for an abundant supply, cannot be said to have known the pains and anxieties of poverty, and, even if for any reason he chooses to forego the immediate use of his resources, the knowledge that he has them is an incalculable support and removes him from the class of really poor men. Hunger has no terrors for one who can turn stones into bread and miraculously multiply loaves and fishes. Fatigue and homelessness are impossible to one who ever carries about with him a consciousness of almighty power and of universal dominion. The desertion of his human supporters would be no disaster or trial to one who could at will summon legions of angels. There is no possibility of walking by faith and being an example of heroism, if the end is known from the beginning and if mere finite temptations are offered to an infinite God or petty obstacles opposed to almighty powers. If Jesus was God, he walked in invulnerable armor and wielded irresistible weapons, and is no example or comfort to such frail and suffering soldiers of conscience as we are. But that

the professed Son of Man deceived men with mere phantom sorrows and unreal wounds and death is a heresy that the intellect and conscience of Christendom rejected in the early centuries and always rejects when it is nakedly asserted; but this heresy is nevertheless inextricably bound up with the belief in the supreme deity of Jesus, and his omniscience and perfect command of all forces while on earth.

We must, then, make our election between considering him God or man, for he cannot be both. Poets indeed have feigned such dual beings, but they do not exist, and a demi-god is as unreal as a centaur or a mermaid.

Starting, then, with the fundamental conception that Jesus was a man, it follows that all statements that attribute to him actions or powers wholly superhuman must be either mythical or legendary. In regard to all other mythologies and legends most people act upon this principle without the slightest hesitation or momentary suspicion that they are wrong. They dismiss all such tales from Greek or Roman, from Hindu or Arabian mythology with perfect confidence and serenity, simply because they know them to be contrary to the familiar laws of nature and facts of life. Protestants also dismiss with equal nonchalance

all the apocryphal gospels and all the vast body of legends of the Madonna, and of all the countless saints and martyrs of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet there is no essential difference between the miracles of the canonical and the miracles of the apocryphal gospels. The unerring popular judgment has selected in the gospels the best specimens of this class of tales as it selects the best of every class of imaginative, historical, or scientific books, but to the best as to the worst, to the most as to the least artistic legend, the same tests must be applied. How do we know that the legends of the Madonna are not true? Do not Protestants dismiss with indifference the story of her assumption to heaven, even while they are pained that those who carry Protestant principles a step further should dismiss the assumption of Jesus as a legend of the same class and in no respect more authentic than the story of the ascent of Romulus or of the scores of others of whom such translations have been fancied or feigned?

If thorough consistency in the application of critical tests seems shocking to any persons, would it not be well for such persons to aim at consistency in deductions from their own premises? If the gospel statements are all to

be literally accepted the primacy of Peter and the power of his successors to bind and loose is not easily disproved, nor is the church easily acquitted of sinful negligence in not exercising its miraculous power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to cast out devils. The truth is that Protestants treat the Scriptures capriciously, and waver oddly between faith and rationalism. If reason is to be thrown out of court and faith in the infallibility of Scripture is to govern belief and conduct, let faith have the full and rich development of the Middle Ages, but if that experiment has been sufficiently tried and found to issue in intellectual and moral degradation, let us consistently apply the principles of reason and not, by halting between two opinions, obtain the benefit of neither.

But the word faith is abused when it is applied to the belief of things inherently incredible. True faith is always in accord with the highest reason. It applies only to things beyond our present knowledge, and it is wholly rational to hope and believe many things which we cannot yet prove. But while we thus outrun knowledge and leave it far behind in our hopes for the future of our race in this world and in the world to come, we do

not ignore it in relation to matters under our present observation. To all earthly history and to all alleged facts we apply the simple tests of common experience and common knowledge, and if they cannot bear those tests we reject them as fancies.

It is not impossible, it is not usually difficult, to distinguish truth from error. There is practically no dispute among men as to the qualities of things and the forces of nature. There are no men who contend that water is dry or that fire is cold. No persons dispute the seasons or the law of gravitation, or the general laws of cause and effect in relation to present events. We all see wonderful recoveries from disease, and are prepared for very remarkable manifestations of the recuperative powers of the body and soul, but none of us believe in any story of the resurrection of a dead man or woman in modern times. It is entirely reasonable, and it is the only course that is reasonable, to reject any story in the gospels that you would reject if it were found elsewhere in reference to the same age and country. What you would not believe in Ben Hur on the authority of General Lew Wallace, it is not reasonable to believe in the gospel on the authority of Matthew or John, for they, too,

wrote with the story-teller's art and bias, and liability to error. The truth is, our imagination is misled by the remoteness of time and place, for it is easy to believe almost anything of unknown countries and ancient heroes. Times and countries do actually differ so much that credulity in reference to the characteristics of foreign countries and men is quite natural, but while we are prepared for very strange stories if told by reputable witnesses, as to the diet or clothing, the height, or the strength, or the skill, the cruelty or gentleness, the treachery or the honor, of a newly discovered race, we should require vastly stronger testimony than that which supports the account of the raising of Lazarus before we should believe a similar narrative if it dealt with a recent occurrence in any country whatever. There are some laws to which we all think that there are no present exceptions, and, but for the overpowering influence of early teaching which often paralyzes the mind and makes it absolutely incapable of free and rational action in reference to some subjects, we should at once pronounce many Biblical narratives as false, which we now under the mesmeric influence of special education receive as true.

Protestantism is happily rid of many of the beliefs and superstitions of Roman Catholicism. It has no holy relics, no miracle-working bones of saints, no winking Madonnas, no doctrine of transubstantiation, but it is still bound to a book full of untenable legends. All its efforts to exhort Christians to righteousness, to educate young people to truth, to extend Christianity among the heathen, all its useful activities of every kind are thwarted and impeded by this load of past ignorance and superstition, this mass of once believed but now incredible stories about angels and devils and prodigies.

Well may the church pray, as did Paul in his agony, to be delivered from this dead body. But true prayer must be supplemented by faithful and intelligent work. The gospels themselves contain the principles by which the church must work out its redemption. They assert the supremacy of the reason and conscience over law and tradition. The true believer in the gospel believes in the mutability of its form as the true believer in the cloud knows that it is forever changing and yet is indestructible. Our life is a vapor. The world is a cloud. All our formulas of knowledge shall vanish away. The gospels are a

transient record of a sublime manifestation of the exhaustless wisdom and goodness of God.

The foundation for all the more extreme theories about the person of Christ is the fourth gospel. Rev. Joseph H. Crooker, a specialist in this field of knowledge, in his work on *The New Bible and Its Uses* says: "Of those who have contributed important articles to the discussion from about 1880 to 1890, about two to one reject the Johannine authorship of the gospel in its present shape—that is to say, while forty years ago great scholars were four to one in favor of, they are now two to one against, the claim that the apostle John wrote this gospel as we have it. Again one-half of those on the conservative side to-day admit the existence of a dogmatic intent and an ideal element in this gospel, so that we do not have the thought of Jesus in his exact words, but only in substance."

Some light is thrown upon these opinions in regard to the work which goes under the name of John by a general statement which is taken from the article on the gospels in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* The writer says: "A work of this kind, notwithstanding the presence of historical elements,

seems rather to deserve to be called a poem, or a drama, than a biography."

In all scientific investigations the necessary basis is a belief in the uniformity of physical law, and similarly in all historical research the one trustworthy and indispensable clue is the essential oneness of the human mind and the similarity of its products to each other. The so-called gospel of John is a poem of the same nature, though of a higher order, as Browning's *A Death in the Desert.* The gospel does for Jesus what Browning attempts to do for John, interprets his ideas and speaks dramatically through his mouth. And regarded in this manner, what a sublime and noble work it is! Its three chief ideas are expressed by the words, life, light and love. Jesus is represented as the bread of life, the water of life, as the resurrection and the life. He is the light of the world. Above all he is the revealer of the Father's love. The gospel is condensed into three short words, "God is love" The fourth gospel reaches its climax of power and beauty in the chapter beginning, "Let not your heart be troubled." That chapter is the theodicy of Jesus. In every age men have wondered how it is that a God of infinite wisdom and power should permit such sin and

suffering as we see in the world, and such an awful tragedy as death to terminate human life. Yet God vindicates himself in every human heart. We all live in some measure of faith and hope, and in almost every generation some devout seer tries to pierce the clouds and darkness that are round about God and give us a clearer vision of his goodness and his glory.

Jesus had just told his disciples that his death was very near. His heart had overflowed with tenderness. He had called them his "little children," or, as the diminutive might be rendered, his dear children, and had told them that if they wanted to be true to him and represent him rightly to the world they should love one another.—Don't be afraid of death, and don't be troubled on my account. "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." . . . Then said Philip, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." His entreaty means, Show us that God is really a Father and not a stern and inexorable Ruler.

Jesus answered the question of Philip and of us all by saying in effect: I have been a long time with you, Philip, and don't you believe yet that I love you as I love myself, and would

guard all your interests as I would my own? Don't you know me well enough to believe that I would never betray or deceive you? Would you not have confidence in me in all circumstances? If you could trust me, trust your Father in heaven, for all human goodness is but a reflection of divine goodness, and if you believe that I have a compassionate heart, believe that God has one also and will love and care for you everywhere and always.

The language of the fourth gospel is but a more dramatic expression of what Matthew records in the words: "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" It has been said that it is the purpose of the fourth gospel not only to show us "a God-like Christ but a Christ-like God."

The spirit of God lighteth every one that cometh into the world. All parents, at least all mothers, are an earthly providence. God has made of one blood all races of men, and wherever a little head, white or brown or black,

is pillowed upon a mother's breast, that child has a glimpse of the Love that sits enthroned above and directs all other forces for its own beneficent ends.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

THERE is a natural impulse to make a work of art as perfect as possible. In a biography this impulse leads the writer to heighten the virtues, to conceal the defects and to magnify the achievements of his subject. This tendency is so marked as to have obtained the name of the biographical frenzy.

The hero's birth is invested with portents, his ancestry is made as illustrious as possible, his future greatness is prophesied in infancy, he has one or more miraculous escapes from death, and he early displays superior wisdom. Materials for such legends are abundant in every life, for every child shows some "intimations of immortality," and every one brings to the hearts of its parents a new sense of the mystery and divineness of human life. No child is commonplace to its mother, and it ought not to be to any one, for the growth of a child in wisdom and stature is the most marvelous thing in all this world of marvels.

The story of the massacre of all the children

in Bethlehem and the vicinity in order to ensure the death of Jesus is not found in secular history or in any gospel but that of Matthew, and is in all probability due to the myth-making impulse. It seems natural to the biographers of Jesus that he, the Son of Man, the typical Israelite, should in all things "be like unto his brethren" and should represent in his own person the history of his race, and therefore as the Israelites had suffered captivity in Egypt and their male children had been killed by their jealous rulers, Jesus was made to flee thither for safety and remain there a virtual prisoner till the death of Herod in order, as Matthew himself asserts, that the prophecy of Hosea regarding him might be fulfilled. What Hosea says is not, however, a prophecy but a statement of fact, and the actual reason for the account in the gospel is one of dramatic fitness.

The doctrine of the immaculate conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit is a figurative way of expressing one of the most important of all truths, viz, that a pure birth is needful to a healthful life. The children of the diseased are themselves diseased, the offspring of the lustful are impure; to be ill-born is the greatest of misfortunes, as to be well-born is the richest

of blessings. In all the gospel story there is nothing so intrinsically rational as that the purest and noblest of men was the offspring of pure and deep affection, and this I conceive to be the meaning of the boldly figurative language employed.

The belief that the fate of men is controlled by the stars and may be read in them is very ancient and very natural to a pastoral nation, such as the Jews originally were. Shepherds living under the open sky and constantly seeing and feeling the influence of sun and moon could not but think that the countless lesser but still glorious orbs that stud the heavens had some power over the earth beneath them. The movement of the two larger bodies produces great effects. It was natural to conclude that the more intricate movements of the smaller bodies should produce correspondingly intricate and minute results. The sun and moon were universal lords, the planets were believed to preside over the destinies of single persons and to foretell particular events. Language, the best history of a race, because the one unconsciously written by the whole people, still shows many traces of these primitive beliefs. Men "bless their stars" for good fortune and say that an enterprise that turns

out badly was ill-starred. Mirthful men are still called jovial, as if born when Jove was in the ascendant; sad men, saturnine; fickle ones, mercurial; and mad men, lunatics. Astrologers developed these beliefs into elaborate systems, and poets embellished them with many graceful details.

It was inevitable that men should think that the birth of so remarkable a prophet as Jesus had been predicted. Accordingly wise men from the east, the special home of astrology, are represented as seeing his star and coming to worship him. In the same spirit of poetic adoration the church later changed "the star-led wizards," the simple "wise men" of Matthew into three kings of different nations and ages, that youth in the person of one, manhood in that of another, and age in that of the third, might do honor to the infant Redeemer.

The gospel of Matthew not only embellishes the earlier and balder account of Mark with this beautiful story of the devout astrologers and the guiding star, but it also provides Jesus with a line of noble ancestors. The ancestry differs in many respects from the genealogy given in Luke, but both Matthew and Luke agree in tracing the descent of Jesus through his father Joseph. This is evident testimony

that in the earlier historic period there was no doubt that Jesus was the son of Joseph, since otherwise Joseph's descent would have been altogether unimportant. The last eight verses of the first chapter of Matthew are a later and awkward addition, and in Luke there is a still clumsier modification of the original narrative, as the writer has contented himself with a brief interpolation, making verse 23 of chapter 3 read, "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph."

In other portions of his narrative of the birth of Jesus, Luke goes as far beyond Matthew as Matthew had exceeded Mark, for while Matthew is content with signs in the sky and warnings sent in dreams, Luke makes the angel Gabriel descend and announce to Mary that she should be the mother of the "Son of God." Gabriel is also sent to make an announcement to Zacharias of the birth of his son John.

Matthew, in his account of the preaching of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth, says that those who heard him "were astonished and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and

his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas? and his sisters are they not all with us?" This account is clear enough as to the common opinion of the people of Nazareth, but it may be said that Mary kept her great secret from strangers and "pondered it in her heart."

It appears, however, more probable from Luke's narrative that she habitually spoke of Joseph as the father of Jesus, for on the memorable occasion when he had been lost during the visit to Jerusalem at twelve years of age, when a mother's joy at his recovery would have surprised her out of merely conventional language, she associates Joseph with herself in the most absolute manner, saying, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

The gospel of John, which was written much later than the narratives of Matthew, Mark and Luke, presents an entirely different phase of Christian thought. The simple and more poetic early legends are discarded and the language of Gnostic philosophy is employed. There is so much sin and suffering in the world that the Gnostic philosophers thought that the world could not have been made by a being of infinite power and goodness, such as they con-

ceived the supreme divinity to be, and so they imagined that it had been made by one of the many created spirits or Æons who surrounded his throne. The name of some of the Æons were *Life*, *Light*, and *Reason* or *Wisdom*, or the *Word;* and John in the opening of his gospel, ignoring all human genealogies and accessory honors, identifies Jesus with the Word, the Life and the Light. At the same time he antagonizes the Gnostic philosophy and maintains the unity of the Godhead by declaring that these names denote attributes of the divine mind and have no existence apart from it. In regard to the gospel of John it may be said that it maintains throughout the same height of mystical exaltation. It is written with the express object of enforcing belief in Jesus as the Son of God and accordingly the manifestations of his power, though fewer, are more remarkable. Matthew reports twenty, Mark eighteen, Luke twenty-one, and John only eight miracles. The first three gospels report the cure of blind men, but it is only the gospel of John that tells of the restoration of sight to one who was *born* blind. Three gospels tell of the raising of the daughter of Jairus who had died just before Jesus reached the house, but it is only John's gospel that narrates

the resurrection of Lazarus after he had been dead four days.

To recapitulate and conclude this chapter: Mark gives no account of the birth of Jesus, Matthew and Luke surround it with prodigies, provide him with a royal pedigree and invent a story by which he is born at Bethlehem, the city of his alleged ancestor David. It is not necessary to swell this narrative by any discussion of the truth of the account of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. As a statement of fact it must stand or fall with the narrative of miraculous events in which it is embedded. But, whatever may be said of its literal truth, the story is poetically both true and beautiful.

At the Reformation, Protestantism cut down the ranker growth of superstition, but it did not destroy the roots. In leaving the legends about the birth and miracles of Jesus it retains the germs of every other wild exaggeration of the *Acta Sanctorum.* The life of Jesus in the gospels implies a similar life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and that a legend of Mary's mother, Saint Anne.

CHAPTER III

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

Jesus must have been a pure, gentle, sympathetic and thoughtful boy. As he grew in stature he grew also "in wisdom and favor with God and man." We know even less of his boyhood than we do of that of Shakespeare, for there is but one recorded incident that is worth attention. The apocryphal gospels, indeed, are full of pseudo miracles. They say that he made clay sparrows and then gave them power to fly; that Judas, his schoolmate, was even then jealous of him, called him a sorcerer and struck him. Jesus then prophesied that the side struck by Judas would be pierced by a spear at his crucifixion. His other playmates recognized his goodness and greatness and foreshadowed the crown of thorns by crowning him with flowers. He embarrassed the teacher of the village school by deep questions, and when the perplexed and angry pedagogue lifted his rod to strike the precocious child, his arm was paralyzed.

The one recorded incident that bears the

stamp of probability is that of the visit to the temple at the age of twelve.

Some time or other Jesus must have consciously surrendered his will to that of God. I imagine it was very early in life, for at twelve he was about his Father's business and was growing in wisdom and in favor with God and man. From the fact that nothing is said about a struggle it seems reasonable to infer that his self-dedication was without agony and tumult.

That Jesus should early feel that he was a "dedicated spirit," and that his was to be a life of service to God and man was very natural. He was fed on the noble poetry of Israel, rendered to him tenfold more sweet and inspiring in that he first heard it from the lips of a devoted mother. Mary was herself a richly gifted poet, as is shown by her recorded poem, the *Magnificat.* If the external evidence that it is actually her composition is not in itself sufficient, it is confirmed by the fact that her son was so great a poet, and according to the common law of heredity he derived his mental character chiefly from his mother. That one so imbued with the spirit of Old Testament poetry that approaching maternity led her to express her joy in a lofty psalm should

soothe her firstborn to slumber with all the tender, all the beautiful, and all the sublime passages of the poetry of her people, is self-evident. The lullabies of the infant Jesus were of the overshadowing wings and the everlasting arms of the Lord God of Israel. The last sound that fell upon his ears before the coming of "the sweet dream softer than unbroken rest" was sometimes perhaps a song without words or the absurd little rhymes, the "baby talk" into which affection pours a wealth of beauty and meaning, but oftener, I think, it was some sublime utterance such as: "The Lord is thy Keeper. Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. He giveth his beloved sleep."

The faith in the inherent nobility of woman which Jesus always exhibits is a very strong though an indirect testimony to that gentle and long-suffering mother, to whom the early and mediæval church accorded honor almost equal to that which it gave her son.

Next to the influence of Mary was that of Joseph. I imagine that he was a grave, God-fearing man. Every morning before work began and every evening when the day's labor was done, the father gathered his family about him and selected "with judicious care" some

portion of Scripture for reading and comment. Jesus shows so intimate an acquaintance with every part of the Old Testament that it is most probable that he learned it day by day at home and was not merely dependent upon the weekly readings at the synagogue.

When the Scripture had been read in this household at Nazareth, they probably sang a hymn together, for the habits formed in childhood are persistent, and we read that Jesus not only prayed but sang with his disciples on the last night of his life, the night on which he was betrayed. I cannot think that these daily communings ended without prayer.

Jesus was the eldest child and therefore had the opportunity of watching the infancy of his four brothers and of his sisters. He loved children. Their innocence and trustfulness attracted him, and in his later teaching he often held them up for imitation. The kingdom of heaven, he declares, is only for those who have the spirit of children.

Then there was the discipline of daily work. He learned industry and economy so thoroughly in that well-ordered household that they became instinctive and a second nature. "I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day; for the night cometh when no man

can work," is natural language for the son of a faithful carpenter.

He learned from many a precept in the Book of Proverbs and from the example of father and mother that idleness is a sin and a reproach. Doubtless the lesson of thrift was also impressed with all the thoroughness with which it is learned in a poor and conscientious Scotch or New England household. In order that the income of a village carpenter might suffice for the needs of a large family nothing must be wasted. Whatever may be thought of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost," is not only pious and sensible language but exceedingly natural to one who in childhood had felt poverty's sharp pinch and had acquired a horror of waste as one of the great causes of poverty and distress.

As the boy grew older and was kept more steadily at work he learned to prize more and more the blessed weekly rest of the Sabbath. People who have all the leisure they want every day do not know what a beneficent provision the day of rest is to those who toil steadily from sunrise to sunset for six days of every week. I don't wonder that Jesus was indignant at a ceremonialism that hedged the

Sabbath about with vexatious restraints and deprived it of half its value. "The Sabbath," he declared, "was made for man." Yet he was no Sabbath breaker. He did not waste the precious day in frivolity, but gained from it the richest refreshment of both body and spirit. The Sabbath was the core of the Jewish, as it is of the Christian, religion. In fact no religion can permeate the mind and heart of a people without systematic instruction, and systematic instruction is impossible without days appointed for the purpose.

Jesus was doubtless as regularly in his place in the synagogue as the elders or "the minister," and the day was to him one of high communion with his Heavenly Father. I imagine him walking with father and mother to the place of prayer and worship, repeating in his heart, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord." I have no doubt he had visions of the presence of God more real and vivid than those of Jacob at Bethel, and that to him the glory of the Lord filled the plain white walls more than to others it filled the temple of Solomon. It is not the place or the mode of worship that brings the sense of God's presence but the spirit of the worshiper. God is found

by those who seek him in spirit and in truth.

Perhaps they had no great orator to expound the Law in the little synagogue at Nazareth. Perhaps sometimes to an undevout and unsympathetic attendant the service seemed dry and formal, but to the heart hungering and thirsting after righteousness, to the one who can truly say that the words of God's mouth are more to him than his necessary food, every sincere service, however poor and inartistic, is a benediction.

To worship God sincerely anywhere and in any manner purifies and elevates the soul of man, but I cannot help thinking that the Sabbath services at Nazareth were more than ordinarily spiritual and helpful. It is impossible that a man like Joseph should not have an influence in the community. The Psalmist prays, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." There is no such thing as solitary piety or solitary wickedness. Every man is a source of good or evil to others, and no doubt the pious Joseph and the devout Mary had a circle of like-minded companions with whom they took "sweet counsel." The office

of Reader and Expounder in the synagogue was not permanent, but was assigned from time to time to any qualified layman, and it is probable that Joseph was among those who were appointed to it, and that Jesus often heard his father speak not only in the retirement of the home but also with the greater emphasis and solemnity which the presence of a congregation adds to words of prayer and exhortation.

Indeed, the editor of the Oxford Sunday School Teacher's Bible, basing his view upon Luke 4: 16 supposes that Jesus himself held the office of Sheliach, or Reader, at Nazareth, and this opinion seems the more reasonable from the fact that even in the beginning of his itinerant ministry he seems to have had the readiness and self-possession in public speaking which are commonly acquired only by long practice. We are not told when Joseph died, but we know that he was living when Jesus was twelve, and even if the good man passed from earth soon after this time there is no doubt that his image would be deeply imprinted on the mind of his susceptible and thoughtful son. It is a mistake that the beautiful unity of the Holy Family, as it at least partially appears in Catholic art and devotion, should among Protestants have been broken by the false

exaltation of the son and the inconsistent and ungenerous neglect of his godly parents. Jesus, though his stage of action has been conspicuous beyond that of all other persons, was in all essential elements of character akin to the devout and faithful father and mother who shaped his character in that humble home in the little village among the hills of Galilee.

The records of the life of Jesus are so meager that we know nothing of his boyish friendships. We know that he who "loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus," and who showed such special marks of affection to John that he was known as the "beloved disciple," must have been of a tender and companionable disposition and have sought to gain from heaven "its choicest gift, a friend."

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY MANHOOD OF JESUS

THE reticence of his biographers has doubtless upon the whole contributed to the fame of Jesus. The best part of the life of a writer and teacher is to be found in the words and acts connected with his calling and chief work. In everything else he is on the same plane as other men or even on a lower one, for there is in Nature a stern law of limitation and compensation by which the greater the power of one sort possessed by any creature the less its strength of other kinds. Bird and beast are allotted swiftness or strength or cunning, but no animal combines them all in a high degree. Those birds that have developed the highest power of flight by constant use of the wings, when necessity brings them to earth are suddenly transformed into clumsy and ungainly creatures that have all but lost their power to walk. And every specialist among men, whether devoted to one work by deliberate choice and training or set apart by an imperious instinct, must pay the heavy penalty

of his peculiar greatness. The whole force of the nature goes to feed the favored quality, and everything else dwindles away.

In all probability, therefore, Jesus was not a very good carpenter. Industrious, painstaking, conscientious, he must have been in all his work, but great imaginative and emotional powers are very rarely, if ever, associated with a liking or an aptitude for mechanical details. The pride and affections are not centered there, and excellence in anything is never gained except by single and perfect devotion.

But whatever the quality of his work the significant fact remains that Jesus was a carpenter, and perhaps no mechanical occupation is more favorable to the development of the intellectual and the moral faculties.

It was an essentially honest occupation, one in which every penny he received was earned by labor that benefited both himself and his employer. The carpenter is one of the earliest and most essential figures of civilized society. His occupation is honorable and useful. By his agency the dark cave in which man crouched like a beast is transformed into the house in which the moral virtues may develop and the home be created.

I am glad that we do not know more of the

routine portion of the life of Jesus than we do. I am glad that we do not know more of Shakespeare, for the unknown part of his life has perished only because it was commonplace, and if the frivolous details of his physical life had been forced upon us they would have obscured the picture of that sublime intellectual activity which is alone important to the world.

Indeed I think it providential and a great benefit to the world that most of the details of the life of Jesus have been lost. I do not mean to insinuate, for I do not believe, that there was anything discreditable and unworthy in that great life. I only mean that the flesh, even in its fairest form, is a veil which hides and obscures the purity and greatness of the spirit, and the spirit of Jesus was not only superior to its earthly tabernacle but superior to any conception of his greatness that any other mind has been able to form. Only a mind and heart in all respects like his own could do him full justice.

No doubt Jesus was intensely susceptible to all the beauties of the favored part of the world in which he lived. The mountains of Galilee were his friends. "He drank his fill from the bare bosom of nature." It is very likely that

he roamed from place to place in the ordinary course of his trade, as it is still the custom in Syria for a carpenter to do, just as in earlier days in New England the tailor and the shoemaker used to come round every year and work for a household until its wants were supplied. As Jesus wandered among these simple mountaineers he found a primitive and noble race the recollection of whose sturdy and handsome bodies, and of their simple, generous natures was often a refreshment to him when he came into contact in later years in Judea with men of an inferior physical and moral type.

In after years, when he was exhausted by the pressure of throngs of people, by the importunities of the sick and needy, and chafed by controversy, he gathered strength again by prayer upon his beloved mountains and beneath the solemn stars which spoke to him of the vastness of his Father's domain.

It is not unlikely that his intense patriotism led him also to make voluntary excursions to the more accessible historic scenes. I think he must have stood among the cedars of Lebanon and trodden the grass of Hermon fresh with its morning dew. Perhaps Jesus never extended his travels to southern Arabia and saw the frowning mass of granite from

which amid thunderings and lightnings the Law was given to Israel by the hand of Moses, but Mount Carmel, the scene of the triumph of Elijah, the next in order of might among his forerunners, was little more than a day's walk distant from Nazareth, and to it he must often have gone, not drawn merely by the charms of the mountain and its memories, but that from its summit he might gaze upon the broad and mysterious expanse of the Mediterranean Sea. But however widely he may have traveled, Nazareth was his home, and its picturesque scenes were the most familiar and the dearest to his heart.

Nazareth nestles in one of those vales

> "Where deep and low the hamlets lie
> Beneath their little patch of sky
> And little lot of stars,"

but in all probability Jesus walked almost daily to "the brow of the hill whereon the city was built" and drank in with ecstasy the wide sweep of landscape commanded by it.

National ideas do much to form the character of an ambitious youth. No race however timid and feeble is content with servitude, but all men feel instinctively that freedom is their right and long to obtain deliverance from a foreign yoke.

In any examination of the life of Jesus it must never be forgotten that he belonged to one of the greatest races in human history. No other highly developed race has maintained a well-defined national life for so many centuries, or has produced such a constant and brilliant succession of men of intellect and moral distinction. Even the laurels of the Greek fade when placed in comparison with the aureole that plays about the head of the Jew. Israel has had a line of prophets who in imaginative power, in moral purity, in unselfish devotion, and in tenacity of purpose far surpass those of any other nation. It was therefore to be expected, in accordance with the analogies everywhere to be observed in nature, that the supreme spiritual leader of mankind should spring from the race that has shown pre-eminent genius for religion.

The largest and finest apples are in the most highly cultivated orchard, the fairest and most fragrant flowers are in the best kept garden, the tallest tree stands in the mightiest forest, the greenest valley is amid the most verdant landscape, the highest mountain peak is in the highest mountain range, the greatest tidal wave occurs in the broadest and deepest ocean, and the brightest stars are clustered into the most

splendid constellations. It is impossible that a great man should spring from an inferior race, for every man in order to be great needs the momentum of example and sympathy.

As Jesus grew up to manhood he had a passionate and absorbing desire "to make some useful plan or book or sing some song" for Israel's sake, but alas! the ordinary official pathway to influence was barred to him. There was no profession but that of the Scribe, and the hair-splitting casuistry of these Pharisaic teachers, their elaborate ceremonialism, their solicitude about every trifle and above all their ineffectiveness in enforcing the "weightier matters of the law, justice and judgment" were utterly repugnant to him. Some of these doctors of the law forbade a man to wear a newly-finished garment on the Sabbath lest a needle should be still sticking in it and he should then bear a burden on the holy day. They forbade him to walk in tall ripe grass on the seventh day lest he should knock out the seeds and thus thresh grain on the Sabbath. They regarded it as of such importance that a man should always wash his hands before eating that they venerated as a martyr a man who starved to death rather than violate the rule, although no water were accessible.

The Jewish church in fact, though it had reached its maximum of external activity and splendor, was exhausted and decaying. It was like an overgrown tree most of whose life has gone to its extremities. Its trunk was huge and majestic, its branches were numerous, its leaves were green and full, and apparently it was the pride of the forest, yet it was hollow at the heart and the giant was in reality ready to be uprooted by the first blast of a storm.

Jesus could not take his credentials and become a teacher in a church whose doctrines were false, whose ceremonies were frivolous, whose general activity was misdirected. He shrank from a violent break with the existing order of things, and yet he could find no place for himself in it. One thing he had determined, he would either speak what he believed to be true or be silent as a public teacher. He chafed at the obscurity and inactivity of his life, for "he was tempted in all points as we are," yet he saw no opening for any more conspicuous and useful career. But he was true to his ideals.

While he was thus "nourishing a youth sublime" and silently preparing himself, Judea was agitated by a movement whose influence

soon spread to Galilee and other outlying provinces. A new prophet had arisen of the spirit and power of Elijah. The whole nation had long been expecting deliverance from the Roman yoke by some national hero anointed and commissioned of God for that purpose and when John the Baptist issued from the seclusion in which his life had been spent and began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," he found crowds of eager listeners and among them Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER V

THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION

It was no idle curiosity that led Jesus to make the long and toilsome journey from Nazareth to the southern part of Judea. John's preaching, as reported, accorded closely with the hopes and half-formed purposes that had long filled the mind of Jesus, and so, doubtless feeling that the step was a momentous one and that he might be breaking with his old life forever, Jesus determined to see and hear for himself and, if on a nearer view he approved of John's methods, to attach himself to the movement begun by the Baptist.

John was a simple-minded and unlearned man who had spent most of his life as a hermit; and, though he was an intense patriot and could not refrain from rebuking the wickedness of the "generation of vipers" which had caused God in his anger to subject his people to the yoke of the Romans, yet he did not feel that he was able, like another Gideon or Judas Maccabæus, to break that hated yoke and become the deliverer of his nation. He was

not a warrior or a man of action but a voice only, and as a voice he cried, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He knew that one far mightier than himself was needed to purge away the elaborate and imposing, yet essentially empty, ceremonialism into which Judaism had degenerated, and especially that a wisdom and strength far beyond his own were needed to check the greed, luxury, and ambition that were demoralizing the nation. The inward voice which had commanded him to preach had assured him that his efforts should not be in vain, but that the work he was not able to complete should be taken up by some mightier successor and carried forward in power. John had looked with eager expectation at every man of all the multitudes of those who presented themselves for his baptism for one who seemed likely to be the Messiah he was expecting, yet the inward voice was silent until Jesus came. But when John saw and talked with Jesus that strange voice which had first told him to preach, spoke to him again and said, "This is he that baptizeth not with water only but with the spirit of holiness."

No divine inspiration ever entirely overpowers the freedom of the human will, and

men will forever look upon the humility and self-abnegation of John as one of the most beautiful illustrations of wisdom and virtue in all the records of humanity. The language ascribed to him is perhaps not historical, yet in substance and spirit at least he declared to his followers: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Here is the man who is to do away with the empty and barbarous, the worse than useless, the cruel, degrading and outworn system of sacrifices which so many earlier prophets have protested against in vain. Here is God's messenger and anointed one who will purify his people and take away their sins by righteousness and mercy and not by "the blood of bulls and goats," which is not pleasing to God and cannot atone for sin.

John was at first unwilling to baptize one whom he felt to be greater than himself, but Jesus urged it and John assented. The act of Jesus was a very gracious one. He too was free from all petty jealousy. He was not angry because John had anticipated him in the kind of work he had been longing for an opportunity to do; he was content to enroll himself in the ranks of John's followers. But the event was not to be so. When Jesus went

down into the water and John poured the emblem of purification upon his head, Jesus distinctly heard a voice that said unto him, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

There is here no occasion for doubt. "There are more things in heaven and in earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy." Socrates, Mohammed, Peter the Hermit, Joan of Arc, and many others have heard, or believed they heard, voices which commanded, encouraged or restrained them at critical periods in their lives.

Whatever Jesus heard, it affected him most profoundly. He was driven by his agitated spirit into the wilderness, for he felt as all really great men feel that a man's responsibility for his conduct is personal, and cannot be abdicated or even shared. Like Moses before and Paul after him, he went into solitude to fight out the great battle with his doubts and fears and to determine his course of action.

It was no light thing to announce himself a prophet and to undertake to rebuke wickedness in high places, to antagonize deep-seated national customs and prejudices, and to oppose his opinion, that of a young and unlearned

mechanic, to the teaching of aged and venerated doctors of the law.

Mind and body suffered and most men would have collapsed under the strain. But the temperament of Jesus was intense, and the occasion of his excitement was great. It is not, therefore, surprising that he forgot all about his need of food and wandered for many days without the sense of hunger.

But at last even the strong vitality of the young carpenter-prophet was exhausted. His overtaxed physical nature asserted itself, and he hungered. In broken snatches of sleep or in the waking visions of exhaustion and delirium he thought that he was tempted by the devil to make bread out of stones, to throw himself from a pinnacle of the temple, or to make himself a king by worshiping his Satanic tempter.

The temptation of Jesus obviously reflects in exaggerated and grotesque forms the tenor of his ordinary waking thoughts. The practical question of subsistence is imperative. A man must eat or starve, and if he wants to eat and has no money he must either earn his daily bread or beg it. Perhaps Jesus was not long or greatly troubled by this primary aspect of the question. Yet it required faith and

courage to abandon his certain and comfortable subsistence as a workman and to determine to adopt the precarious life of a prophet.

In all probability Jesus had a much harder struggle before he was perfectly willing to renounce "all the kingdoms of this world." It is easy enough to call the grapes that hang too high for us sour. We are all ready to renounce every thing that is quite out of our reach, but to renounce the good things we have or think we may secure is quite another matter. Jesus loved beauty, and long and hard toil had prepared him to relish leisure. His mind, too, was eager for knowledge, and the opportunity for study and travel that money affords was enticing to him. Every man who walks through the long series of stately rooms of a palace full of paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and draperies, and then from its balconies and corridors views the terraced gardens, fair as Paradise with its "flowers of all hues and trees of noblest kind," must feel the fascination there is in great riches.

But whatever attractiveness these things had for Jesus, he rejected the temptation to purchase them in the usual way by selfishness, hardness, and injustice. He would rather

"keep a conscience than a carriage," or its ancient equivalent.

Yet there is a far greater temptation than mere riches. Men desire nothing so much as power.

The young carpenter of Nazareth could no more fail to know that he was greater in soul than his fellows than a man seven feet high can fail to see that he is taller in body. He must often have heard of the doings of Herod Antipas, the princeling who ruled Galilee, and perhaps he had occasionally seen him and estimated him then as contemptuously as he did later when he called him a "fox."

"To the workman belong the tools," said Napoleon, and fitness for rule has by many a man besides Napoleon been considered a sufficient title to a throne. The energetic mayor of the palace thrusts aside the do-nothing king, and from being the power behind the throne changes himself into the ruler upon it. Jesus was tempted to do the same thing. But when he thought of the inevitable consequences of a revolution and a change of dynasty, thought of the wars and sieges that would ensue, thought of men torn from their homes to die, of moaning widows and helpless orphans, thought of all the unutterable wickedness and

misery of a war of ambition, thought of the bloodstained Herod pompously called the Great, yet so tortured by remorse for his crimes that he was the most miserable man in all his dominions,—when Jesus thought of all these things he refused

> "To wade through slaughter to a throne
> And shut the gates of mercy on mankind."

But as Jesus shrank from the brutalities of war, the temptation changed its form and the idea of reaching the high places of power by policy and intrigue suggested itself.

Do not be so harsh and peremptory as John the Baptist or Elijah, said the tempter. Be politic, "worship me," flatter men in power and make yourself indispensable to them, and they will promote you. Enter a Rabbinical school, get a place in the Sanhedrin and in a few years become High Priest, and then, who knows but that the way will open for you to drive out the Roman governor and become the successor of David and the King of Israel. The gospels go farther and say that the temptation of possessing "all the kingdoms of this world" entered his mind. Perhaps he thought it was possible for him to repeat the career of Alexander the Great, who three centuries

earlier, at about his own age, had entered upon the conquest of the world.

The renunciation of the world by Jesus was not like the weariness and satiety which led Charles V., the most powerful monarch of his time, to abdicate his throne and retire to a monastery to spend his last years in rehearsing his funeral and in other gloomy and austere religious ceremonies.

No. The renunciation of wealth and of worldly power by Jesus was the act of a young man full of life and ambition, one who shrank from no danger and responsibility and found his supreme joy in audacious thought and energetic action, but who subordinated everything else to the will of God, to the voice of conscience, to the rights and welfare of others, one who was too generous and noble to make himself great except by love and service, and so never reigned as a vulgar conqueror by imposing laws upon cities and kingdoms and for a little while regulating the external life of a nation. He does not rule *over* men but *in* them. He is the Friend of Humanity, the affectionate elder Brother, the Man of Sorrows, who toiled and suffered and dared for us.

Jesus "tried the spirit" which tempted him.

He had considered the voice that greeted him when he was baptized to be from God, but this whisper of worldly ambition was to him the voice of Satan, and his brief, firm answer, unlike the inquisitive paltering which led to the downfall of Macbeth, was, "Get thee hence, Satan."

Other strange temptations passed through his mind, but he was proof against them all. He had conquered the fear of poverty, calumny and death, he had conquered the love of ease, wealth and power. He accepted the office of a prophet of righteousness with all its dimly-foreseen strife and sorrow, and of a herald of that kingdom of heaven, the speedy coming of which John had announced.

There is nothing in the life of Jesus so wonderful and commanding as the swift completeness of all his moral victories. He never dallied with temptation or placated his conscience with the specious arguments that come thronging to the mind that is inclined to evil. He saw the right by intuition, and his conscience, fortified by long habit and by devout prayer, commanded and obtained instant obedience. The life-long practice of humble duties prepared him for all great emergencies.

When his internal struggle was ended, "angels came and ministered unto him." Food and sleep, memory, hope, conscience, sympathetic friends, and the felt presence of God in his world restored his strength and serenity.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

THE conception for the sake of which Jesus rejected all worldly ambitions was the simplest and yet the grandest that ever entered into the heart of man. He would transform earth into heaven. He would redress all wrongs, cure all diseases, wipe away all tears, he would dry up all the countless streams of sin and sorrow by purifying the corrupt source of them all, the human heart. He would establish a society of men and women who should be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.

He had at first announced that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but, as in the later case of Paul, the opposition of the Jews and the tolerance of the Gentiles changed his views and gradually led him into the sublime conception of a universal religion, a world-wide kingdom of God.

"And when the devil had ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee: and there went out a

fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues being glorified of all." This is the account in the gospel by Luke of the opening of the public ministry of Jesus. Matthew says, "Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus grew into manhood at a time when a mighty hope filled Judea, a hope that time, the destroyer of whatever is destructible, has not yet been able to quench. Even down to our own day, when a Jewish family celebrates the Passover the door is left ajar to admit the prophet Elijah in case he should appear to announce the coming of the Messiah. O, idle waiting and pathetic unbelief! But how eloquent is this custom! If after nineteen hundred years of exile, of poverty, of persecution, and of hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, Israel still clings with desperate tenacity to this expectation, what must have been the original intensity of this faith! No other enthusiasm was ever so ardent and general as the Jewish longing for a Messiah in the time of Jesus, and we can see how events gradually forced upon him the conviction that he was

> "The pillar of the nation's hope,
> The center of the world's desire,"

the one appointed by the omnipotent and eternal God to establish the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

All Judea was in a ferment. The Jews, proud of their ancient and illustrious descent, mindful of their former political greatness, reminded constantly by impressive national festivals of former deliverances from foreign oppressors, and above all fired by the predictions of ardent prophets and the sublime strains of patriotic poets, hated the Roman yoke with a frenzy of animosity compared to which Irish or Dutch hostility to England is almost like affection. The Jewish tax gatherer, the agent of the Roman power, was looked upon with loathing as a traitor and a renegade. He had denied his nationality, he had become a heathen. He was an outcast and associated in the common mind with harlots and vile men. "Publicans and sinners" are almost synonyms in the gospels.

Such was the national discontent that if Jesus had never been born or had never preached the coming of the kingdom of heaven, the course of events, so far as Judaism is concerned, would have been nearly the same. The Jews would, in any case, soon have rebelled against the Roman yoke, and

their nationality would have been destroyed and their religion changed in consequence. In fact it seems to me most likely that the attempt by Jesus to substitute a spiritual and philanthropic revolution for a political one such as was generally expected, actually prolonged the life of the Jewish national institutions, in much the same way as the preaching of John Wesley and his followers reinforced the influences that prevented England from following the lead of France in the eighteenth century, and made his countrymen reform patiently by moral and constitutional methods.

Jesus, like his great modern disciple, Wesley, believed that the really important thing was to break the yoke of sin rather than that of king or governor. He believed that if men were inwardly free and right, outward freedom and outward prosperity would inevitably quickly follow. "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added," might have been said, and is actually implied, of many things beside food and raiment.

In comparing the schemes of most other thinkers with the "kingdom of heaven" as it existed in the mind of Jesus, we notice that all other reformers attach more value to changes in law and institutions, to the regula-

tion of labor and the just distribution of wealth, and in general to man's external condition, than did Jesus.

His primary method for reforming society was to reform the individual members of it. The whole can never be greater than the sum of all its parts. A community made up of imperfect people must be an imperfect community. He wished, therefore, to found a society of perfect people, the beauty and blessedness of whose lives should gradually win all other men to righteousness and peace. "Blessed," said Jesus, "are the pure, the humble, the peacemakers, the merciful, and all who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The conception that the righteous man is blessed rests upon belief in a righteous God, and the conception that a merciful man is blessed upon belief in a merciful God. Accordingly God was to Jesus a Father in heaven, who desired the good of all his children and would certainly give them his holy spirit if they sincerely and earnestly desired to have his spirit and be like him. Then when the heart was pure the life would of course be right, for a good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit.

Jesus preached stern doctrines. Righteous-

ness must have an undivided and absolute sovereignty. You cannot serve God and Mammon. A house divided against itself cannot stand. As Lincoln said of this nation that it cannot exist half slave and half free, so Jesus taught that a man must make his choice between good and evil. He could not mix them and be a little of each, for one principle must be the more potent and eventually must destroy the other. To bring about this result might take a longer or a shorter time, but the result was inevitable, and every one who attempted to save his life by sin was sure to lose it, and every one who was willing, if need be, to lose his life for righteousness was sure to save it.

God's care of the righteous was absolutely perfect. Not a hair of their heads should perish. They need not fear men, for men could only kill the body, and the destruction of the body did not in any degree injure or jeopardize the soul.

Jesus saw very clearly that all men would not at first accept these teachings. In many parables he taught that the kingdom of heaven was a test. It was like a net which caught good and bad. It was like wheat and tares. It was like seed on fertile and on stony soil.

It was like servants entrusted with their Lord's money. It was like virgins invited to a wedding.

It is thus that every great teacher is at times deeply saddened at the thought that in spite of all possible clearness of demonstration, in spite of the most patient teaching and example and the most earnest exhortation, some will remain blind and deaf. Some will be too prejudiced even to listen, some whose interest is for a moment awakened will be too indolent to examine and weigh all the facts and reach an intelligent conclusion, and many will turn away from the clearest light because it rebukes their selfish lives.

Although Jesus attached supreme importance to the purification and ennoblement of the individual life, he did not undervalue changes in external conditions. Jesus persistently advocated justice and mercy, and taught by precept and example that all property is a stewardship. The rich man was condemned for faring sumptuously and neglecting his poorer neighbor. It was not said that his money was not legally and honestly acquired, but he was condemned for not using it better. To clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to visit the sick and the prisoner are paramount duties, and, in the

vision of the last judgment, are the tests by which Jesus will determine his true disciples.

Jesus preached the gospel to the poor. He loved the poor. He showed that he loved them by sharing their lot. By his splendid abilities he might easily have lifted himself into affluence, but he preferred to stay with the class to which he belonged by birth. He stayed poor because he did not want to be a deserter and a shirk. He saw how insufficient are the common charities of men; how unsatisfactory it is to give alms, little driblets of charity to tide men over special periods of distress while at the same time sharply maintaining class distinctions and holding aloof from any real human fellowship and sympathy. Jesus knew that men do not live by bread alone, but that they need food for the soul as well as for the body, and that the one essential food for the soul is love, and that real love always manifests itself in companionship and service.

A poor man was to Jesus a child of God, an heir of heaven, a being of infinite possibilities. He did not look upon men in the mass as part of the resources of a nation, like its sheep and cattle. They were not slaves, serfs, "hands," but thinking brains and throbbing hearts.

They were not pieces on the chess-board to be played hither and thither in the service of the king. They were not food for the sword and spear, "food for powder" in the modern phrase, to be sacrificed in war to serve the ambition of sovereigns or statesmen. Jesus is the greatest asserter of the doctrine that every man has "an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." By every word and deed Jesus preached the gospel to the poor. There is a great difference between the Christianity of most of us and the Christianity of Jesus Christ. Bearing the cross means doing painful duties, and in our artificial society the weak and spoiled children of fortune are little willing and little able to adopt the ideas and imitate the life of him who for our sakes endured the hardships of poverty.

Jesus himself went about doing good. He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and that all true greatness is service and helpfulness and not lordship and power.

His earliest followers so understood him and had all things in common, and in the first century practical philanthropy was one of the church's greatest elements of power. "See," said the wondering heathen, "how these Christians love!" Ah! how soon the disbelief in

God's goodness of poor, burdened and discouraged humanity melts away in the warm sunshine of human love! "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," or, in an older version, "Come unto me, all ye that are careful (full of care), and I will refresh you." No wonder that the common people heard gladly the gospel of Jesus.

It was a gospel of faith, hope and charity, the three Christian graces, fairer than all the nine Muses of poetry and philosophy.

Jesus was taunted by the Pharisees with being the friend of publicans and sinners. His answer was, The publicans and the harlots are nearer the kingdom of God than you are. Sinners who belonged to the neglected and unfortunate classes always had the especial help of Jesus. Many of them doubtless heard from his lips with glad surprise the first kindly and encouraging words ever spoken to them, and they responded without hesitation. He knew that the sinner's lot was hard. Defeated in the battle of life, down-trodden and despised, they had little to lose and much to gain by becoming followers of Jesus. Some of them were attracted only by the "loaves and fishes," and did not tarry long, but others were irresistibly drawn by the beauty of Christ's teach-

ing and life, and remained faithful disciples till death. To the sons and daughters of misfortune Jesus was always strangely tender. Quick to discern the first sign of remorse for sin, quick to speak words of pardon and hope to the penitent, patient with the faults and ignorance of the feeblest and dullest disciple, he "broke no bruised reed and quenched no smoking flax."

But his indignation was hot against hypocrites and cowards. Those who had the fullest light and deliberately rejected it, those who made holy things a mere stock in trade, those who while daily parading their knowledge of the sublime and searching words of the law and the prophets, had hardened their hearts against them, he denounced with unsparing vehemence.

Jesus puts himself before men in two characters; first as a comforter and helper, and second as an example, and these two characters should be exhibited as parts of one life. But human nature feels itself weak and helpless, and shrinks from the labor of imitating a heroic example, and so, for its own consolation, it exaggerates the strength of Jesus and makes him the universal healer and burden bearer. It emphasizes his declaration, "Come

unto me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest," while it overlooks, "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me, cannot be my disciple."

Yet progress is being made, and a hopeful spirit is abroad,—a belief that the conditions of human life may be greatly bettered. It is the glory of Christianity that it is the religion of hope, and that it has taught men to look forward and not back.

CHAPTER VII

CHRIST AS A TEACHER

Some of the ancient rhetoricians taught very truly that the first requisite of the orator is that he should be a good man. Sincerity of character is the great source of strength. A great conviction in the heart gives power to the tongue. Jesus was great as a teacher because his life enforced his utterances.

He believed what he said, and so he taught "as one having authority and not as the scribes." He saw things for himself, and was not bound by the authority of the learned or the opinion of the multitude. He trusted his intuitions. He looked within for truth. He brushed away a body of tradition even more extensive and minute than that which now encumbers and chokes his own teachings. But Jesus did not go to the extremes of the great modern transcendentalists. He built more solidly upon the common experience and established institutions of men. He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill. Like all the greatest men, he looked before and after. He

valued memory as well as hope. He was a conservative as well as a radical. He formed his opinions slowly and carefully, and then held them against all external authority, and only modified them as new light, which he was always ready to receive, shone in upon his own mind. He read as did Bacon the passages in Jeremiah upon the old ways: Stand in the old ways till ye see where the good way is and then walk therein. His description of a wise teacher is that he brings out of his treasury things new and old. What Jesus knew he knew. He did not "nibble and quibble and scribble," and get together a medley of precedent and bind himself body and soul in chains of tradition like the ordinary doctors of the law, but he read the hearts of men, and above all he trusted his own consciousness.

He came not to narrow life, but to elevate it and make it more abundant. The traditions of his race and the narrowness of his own education prevented any full development of his artistic nature, but it manifests itself in the germ. Much as he admired John the Baptist's heroism, and much as he adopted of his ideas and methods, he turned away with dislike from John's coarse clothing and scanty, unwholesome food, and from his ascetic solitude. Jesus

came eating and drinking. He attended wedding feasts and drew illustrations from them. He loved flowers and children and their games.

But the circumstances of the time and the bent of his own mind made oratory and poetry the chief forms in which his love of artistic effect displayed itself. He sang hymns with his disciples. He punned and jested with them. He knew how a feather wings an arrow and how an epigram or skillfully-turned phrase gives currency to a truth. His language is not more remarkable for the truth, weight and dignity of its substance than for the beauty, the symmetry, the melody, the perfect choice and arrangement of words and the abundance, variety, force and appropriateness of the figures. Well might contemporaries say, "Never man spake like this man." According to the definition of a good style as "proper words in proper places," Jesus is the greatest of all masters of style, and it is as natural as it is noticeable that habitual readers of the Bible are superior not only in morals but in grace and power of speech to those who neglect that supreme volume.

The form of Hebrew poetry is simple and rarely degenerates into weakness or triviality.

It maintains a happy medium between the extreme conciseness which prevents either clearness or emotion, and the diffuseness which always causes weakness. To say a thing twice in a somewhat different way is to give a double sense of its beauty and value. It is like turning a coin over and seeing that the reverse side is as rich as the obverse one. To make a statement and then follow it with a brief and wise explanation or proof is to give the sword of truth not merely a sharp edge but a reinforcing weight. The parables have the best literary characteristics of the psalms and prophecies with a clearness of outline and a continuity of development far greater than theirs.

His teaching reaches its climax of beauty and power in the beatitudes. Their value is beyond our poor praise.

> "To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
> To add a perfume to the violet,
> Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

We can but bow in adoration before these, the sublimest and most wonderful of all sayings, the shortest and the greatest of all poems.

Jesus not only delighted in rhythm, but he enjoyed a pun and appreciated its value as a means of fixing an idea in the mind and rous-

ing the emotions. Beneath his surface gaiety he was very serious when he called Simon and Andrew in the playful words, "Follow me, you fishermen, and I will make you fishers of men," and it was at a great crisis in his history that he said to Peter, what may be rendered, Thy name means rock, and on this rock I will build my church.

These and other plays on words appear more plainly in the Greek than in the English revision, but many similar ones are lost in any translation of the language of Jesus out of the Aramaic in which he usually spoke.

I love to think of Jesus as having worked at the poet's as well as at the carpenter's craft, as having tested the value of words, and toiled to attain mastery of all the arts of expression. But, however perfect are his rhythm and diction, these rhetorical excellences are the smallest part of his greatness.

There is no trace in the teaching of Jesus of the influence of the drama as such, yet he is akin to Shakespeare in the natural qualities of his mind, in the quickness and range of his observation and sympathy, and in the ease with which he interpreted the human heart. He looked with genial interest upon all classes of mankind. He talked of shepherds and fisher-

men, of farmers and merchants, of slaves and kings, of stewards and soldiers, of maidens and housewives, of mothers and children, of rich and poor, of sinners and saints, and knew what was in them all. We have but a small selection of his sayings, as we have but a fragment of his life, but the small body of his teaching that remains has furnished more stimulus to thought and more material for profitable comment and elaboration than the works of any other author however voluminous.

Ancient literature is about gods rather than men. Jesus was fed on an imaginative literature which dealt very boldly with the person of God. In the Jewish drama of life, God was the central figure, as he is in some of the medieval miracle plays. If we read the older prophets more closely and sympathetically the language of Jesus would often be more intelligible to us. For example it will assist us in interpreting the gospel accounts of Jesus upon the throne of judgment with all nations before him, if we read that Jeremiah throws his teaching into the same boldly dramatic form and makes a similar claim to universal lordship. "The Lord said unto me, . . . See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull

down and to destroy, and to throw down and to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:9, 10).

In general, according to the habit of his nation and his time, and of all great writings in all times, the language of Jesus was boldly figurative. A great figure rouses the sluggish imagination and stirs the blood like the sound of a trumpet, or it flashes light into the darkest understanding or fastens an idea in the most volatile memory. Who that ever heard them could forget the words, "Let the dead bury their dead," or "If these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out," or "If ye have faith and doubt not ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done."

Jesus inherited figurative language from his great predecessors. His favorite title for himself, Son of Man, he borrowed from Ezekiel. He delighted in the powerful language and sublime imagery of Amos and Hosea, of Isaiah and Jeremiah. He bore aloft their torch and replenished it with fragrant and exhaustless oil. He drew from books and nature. He was a great self-educated poet, like Burns and Bunyan, not spoiled by the super-refinements of the schools.

Jesus is the greatest of all prophets, not only as a teacher of divine truth, but even in the secondary and relatively unimportant character of a prophet, that of a predicter of the course of events. One of the most wonderful of the prophecies is, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." The ravenous wolf and the blood-thirsty tiger are almost exterminated, while the sheep and the cow are possessing the former habitations of the wild beasts. So violent and dishonest men are playing an ever-dwindling part in human history, while the upright, the kindly and the helpful are constantly becoming stronger and more numerous. The robber baron is extinct, the bandit is a vanishing figure. The milder forms of chicanery in business have taken the place of brute violence, and even these are sure eventually to be discarded as both wicked and foolish, as men learn from Jesus that happiness and greatness are attained only by service. Jesus taught men to please God by doing good to man. He softened the stern outlines in which many previous prophets had pictured Jehovah. He took away the anger and the jealousy and the clouds and darkness. For the impassive Creator and the inexorable Judge he substituted the Father in heaven, pitying and

loving all his human children. Some men have impressed themselves upon the world by sheer force of intellect, other men of little intellectual power have swayed great masses by the fervor of their enthusiasm, others have charmed assemblies by a winning personality, by beauty of form and face, by fascination of voice and manner.

Jesus united all these elements of power. His intellect astonished and his tenderness attracted men. He began to preach in the very prime of his vigor and grace when his pure and healthful body, invigorated by regular labor, was able to endure great exertion and quickly to regain its elasticity after fatigue, and when his face without having lost the ineffable grace of youth had already begun to wear the noblest impress of manly dignity.

I think that to his other attractions he added the charm and potency of a flexible and melodious voice. The voice is the outcome of the whole personality, and is often the peculiar organ of its power.

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLES

WONDERFUL as was Jesus as a teacher, his contemporary fame was even more largely due to his marvelous acts, especially his cures of the sick. As has been the case with most successful faith-healers, the first exercise of his power was unsought and almost unconscious. Shortly after he began to proclaim repentance, as he was preaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, "a man with an unclean spirit," a man, that is, whose language and gestures were indecent and shocking, interrupted the service by loud outcries. Jesus recognized the man's infirmity and double consciousness. He soothed and commanded him as Alexander the Great soothed and commanded a fiery horse, till the man became calm and rational. "And they were all amazed," as they well might be. "And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee."

"And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. . . .

And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils."

These verses are from the gospel of Mark, the first and least-embellished of the gospels, and show the prevailing character of the so-called miracles of Jesus. He undoubtedly exerted a marvelous and very beneficial power over the sick. Contact with a strong and kindly personality is always exceedingly stimulating and helpful to those whose nerves are weak and unstrung.

Hysteria, melancholia, paralysis and many kindred diseases have been cured or alleviated by the touch of healers of all religious opinions, and even by that of men without moral earnestness, if their personal force, or rank, or circumstances roused the faith and latent energies of the sufferers who came to them for help.

It is not even necessary that the healer should be present in person. Anything that vividly suggests him and stimulates the imagination of a chronic half-invalid will serve the purpose.

There is no good reason, therefore, to doubt that Jesus effected a great many wonderful cures and that his usual method was to arouse the sufferer's own faith and to stimulate his

dormant energies. He felt that he could not succeed without this co-operation, for we read on several occasions that he could do no mighty works because of the unbelief either of the sick or of their attendants and the surrounding multitude.

Other cures seem to have been effected by the use of simple remedies, such as the application of moist clay or by repeated ablutions in cool waters.

Jesus himself did not profess that his cures were different in kind from those of other healers. When he was accused of witchcraft, and of working by Satanic agency, his simple defense was, "If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges." The cures of Jesus were doubtless more numerous and more wonderful than those of any contemporary or subsequent rival; but, if attention had not been held to them by his remarkable teaching and sublime character, they would soon have been lost in the oblivion that has overtaken the other wonder-workers.

It must be borne in mind also that every wonderful thing is exaggerated, and the more wonderful it is the greater the distortion of the actual fact. The shadow of every body is at

sunrise taller than the body itself; and so, in the morning of life or of knowledge, the rays of fancy lengthen every fact about which they play. Rumor also is a great artist, and as a report passes from lip to lip it gathers new positiveness and details.

Many of the so-called miracles are susceptible of simple natural explanation. A good example is the stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples are terrified at the violence of the storm, but Jesus is calm and confident, and when the squall blows over as quickly as it rose they think that he allayed the winds and the waves and not merely the agitation of their minds.

The miraculous draught of the fishes and the multiplication of the loaves are probably poetic expressions of man's wonder and gratitude at the way in which his wants are so often and so strangely supplied.

The original form of the miracle of the turning of water into wine recorded by John may have been only such a figure of speech. It may have meant only that the presence of Jesus so heightened the joy of the occasion that water tasted as good as wine.

Few commentators take with absolute literalness the words of Deuteronomy 29: 5: "I have

led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot," or those of Psalm 78: 23-25, "God had opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food."

The crude fancy of some illustrators of Scripture has led them to represent "the wall of waters on the right and on the left" of the Israelites as standing upright like two walls of brick, though the verse preceding says that "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night"; and the phenomenon of great tracts of shore being now covered and now bare, according to the force and direction of the wind, is a very familiar one. In Exodus 19: 4, God, through Moses, declares: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself"; and, if this passage were interpreted with the same slavish literalness as some others, it would be the orthodox opinion that at one stage of his journey every Israelite was carried through the air on the back of an eagle, and it would be quite as easy to accept this view as it is to believe that Jonah was safely carried to

shore in a whale, or that Elijah was fed with bread and flesh by ravens.

Many of the accounts of miracles have been colored by the very natural desire of the disciples of Jesus of the second or third generation to make his deeds as wonderful as those of Moses or Elijah. Indeed, the writers of the gospels very frequently avow their eagerness to find in his acts the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the Messiah, and a reference to the passages will also show how little in many cases the so-called fulfillment is like the original prophecy. This is not imposture or wilful deception. It is the enthusiasm of unquestioning faith. At most, these stories only attribute to him works which the writers believed that he could have done and which they regarded as suitable to his character.

Something analogous is found in the Miracle Plays of the Middle Ages, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and in *Paradise Lost*, in all of which God and Jesus are represented as saying and doing whatever writers thought appropriate in the circumstances.

The gospel of John is the latest of the four gospels and this dramatic tendency is even more marked in it than in the narratives of the preceding evangelists. In fact there is an

ascending scale of the marvelous in which Matthew and Mark represent the lowest stage, Luke, a higher one, and John the extreme degree. The miracles recorded in Matthew and Mark are either works of healing or exaggerated accounts of natural occurrences. The only account in Matthew and Mark of the resurrection of the dead is that of the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and, as Jesus was called while the girl was still alive and went immediately (see Mark 5), her recovery may have been a natural resuscitation.

Luke, who writes later and with more deliberate literary art, tells a story of the recalling to life of the son of the widow of Nain as he was being carried to his burial; while John caps the climax by telling of the resurrection of Lazarus after he had lain in the grave four days.

Trances and catalepsies have lasted much longer than four days, and it is possible that the animation of Lazarus was merely suspended. The article on death in *Chambers's Encyclopedia* says that "a French author of the last century, Bruhier, in a work, *On the Danger of Premature Interment*, collected fifty-four cases of persons buried alive, four of persons dissected while still living, fifty-three of persons who

recovered without assistance after they were laid in their coffins, and seventy-two falsely considered dead."

But there is no probability that the case of Lazarus was like any of these. John represents the resurrection of Lazarus as the immediate occasion of the arrest and condemnation of Jesus. He says that some of the Jews "went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11: 46-48).

Again in the next chapter this miracle is said to have caused much of the enthusiasm with which Jesus was received when he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. John's words are, "The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bore record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world is gone after him."

Now if this account is true, is it not very singular that Matthew who relates twenty miracles and Mark who gives an account of eighteen, though they speak of curing men of palsy, of leprosy, of blindness, and of the raising of the daughter of Jairus when she was thought dead, is it not singular that, speaking as they do of so many minor acts of power, they should have omitted all reference to this miracle, the most stupendous one of all? Is it not much more likely that the unknown author of the so-called gospel of John invented the story of Lazarus, than that Matthew, the apostle and companion of Jesus, who, if the resurrection of Lazarus occurred, must have witnessed it with the other apostles, forgot all about it or thought it too unimportant to be mentioned?

The gospel of John is so unlike the other three gospels in its account of the language and the acts of Jesus, and of the nature of his person and claims, that it seems much more probable that it is the effort of some writer of the second century to oppose Gnosticism and convince unbelievers than that it was really the work of the apostle John.

But whoever may be their authors, all the gospels show the same characteristics as the

later biographies and eulogies of Jesus. The lives of Christ by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were written in the same way as this or any other life of Christ. In each case the writer took a preceding report which was assumed to be true, and tried to make his tale more clear and interesting by arranging the incidents in the most effective order, by supplying further details and by conjecturing the motives and feelings of the various speakers. Every preacher does the same thing in perfect good faith, and those who do it most vividly and effectively are the most popular. It is a very noble and beautiful characteristic of man that leads him to adorn and idealize whatever he loves and venerates.

One of the commonest defenses of the myths and legends that have grown up around the life of Christ is that they could not have been invented, and that they transcend the power of the imagination. The argument is foolish and tantamount to denying that there are any myths and legends at all, whereas they are one of the earliest, most abundant, and most persistent forms of literature.

But even supposing for a moment that all the accounts of miracles were literally true, they would be no proof whatever of the deity of

Jesus. They are not more wonderful or better authenticated than the works attributed to Moses and to Elijah. Moses turns a rod into a serpent, he smites the river with it and the water becomes blood, he waves it in the air and summons swarms of flies and locusts, he stretches it forth and causes a storm of thunder and hail, he lifts his hand toward heaven and brings darkness at noon-day, he smites the flinty rock and the refreshing waters gush forth, he lifts up his rod and divides the sea, and stretches it out again and the obedient waters return to their place. Surely this is a sovereignty over the elements far greater than any that is attributed to Jesus in the gospels, yet no one attempts to prove by it that Moses was God. Wonderful power he possessed, and gloriously have poetry and legend magnified it, but it was human and delegated power like that of Jesus, who said, "I can of mine own self do nothing."

Elijah, we are told, was a man subject to passions like our own, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (James 5: 17, 18. See also 1 Kings 17: 1).

According to another legend, Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters of the Jordan, and they were divided hither and thither, so that Elijah and Elisha went over on dry ground. Elijah called down fire from heaven, which burned up two captains and two companies of fifty soldiers each, who had been sent to arrest him. Elijah restored a dead child to life (1 Kings 17).

Elisha, the successor of Elijah, is also said to have brought to life again the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4).

It is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles that Peter prayed and that the dead Tabitha opened her eyes and sat up, and was presented alive to the company of mourners.

These narratives have an important bearing upon the credibility of the accounts of miracles in the gospels. If the gospel miracles stood alone, they would be discredited only by the observations of men of science and by common experience of the laws of nature and the powers of man. As it is, any one who accepts the gospel miracles ought in consistency to accept those of the Old Testament. If he does so, he will find it impossible to draw any line of division between the Old Testament miracles and those of the Apocrypha, and

those attributed to many saints and martyrs of the early, medieval and modern church.

If he can believe that Elisha made an iron ax-head to swim (2 Kings 6), or that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked unhurt in a burning fiery furnace, and came forth without a smell of fire upon their garments (Daniel 3), and that an iron gate opened of its own accord to let Peter pass through (Acts 12), there is no good reason why he should reject any alleged miracles recorded anywhere.

Without professing to know all or perhaps a thousandth part of the processes and possibilities of nature, we ought to be able to make up our minds that such stories are legends pure and simple. The question in its simplest form is, Are we and our children to accept the teachings of modern science, are we to believe our geographies, and books of chemistry and physics as to the uniformity of natural laws, or are we to follow legends and believe that sometimes fire does not burn unprotected flesh, that the law of gravitation does not always act, and that the law of the inertia of inorganic matter is intermittent?

It is as necessary to make this intellectual, as to make any moral, choice. As no man can serve God and Mammon, so no man can both serve

and renounce reason. He must be loyal to his reason as far as it can guide him, or else he must drift helplessly upon the sea of superstition without chart or compass.

Sermons about miracles, like other marvelous stories, are often very amusing, but when the preacher gravely argues for their truthfulness it makes the cynical laugh and the judicious grieve. *Mirum est quod non ridcat haruspex.* It is a wonder that the preachers themselves do not laugh when they repeat these absurdities. Yet some good people cling to them with desperate tenacity. Miracles are to some the very anchor of their hope.

If Jesus was not miraculously born, did not work miracles and did not rise from the dead, they are afraid that his teachings may not be true. It is a needless fear. Indeed, the ground of alarm is in the opposite direction. In the present state of knowledge and opinion, any dogma that is linked to the supernatural (except as all God's works are supernatural) is thereby weakened. It would breed suspicion as to the truth of the plainest demonstrations of geometry, if the text-books of the science were to contain similar fables about the lives of the great geometricians.

In this discussion God's power is not for one

moment in question. God can do whatsoever he will. He can reverse or suspend every law that he has impressed upon matter. It is to my mind blasphemous and ridiculous to think otherwise. The Creator of all things can of course annihilate or change all things. The question is not what he can do, but what he actually does. In the great Ruler of the universe and Father of us all is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Very little reflection will, I think, show that this view is more consistent with the power, wisdom and goodness of God than any other. The uniformity of nature enables man to discover her laws and forces and to make them serve him. They daily load him with benefits, and deceive him by no false promise, yet they constantly check his presumption and remind him of his dependence by the swift and inexorable punishment of every violation. They are adapted to stimulate man's intelligence and to awaken his wonder gratitude and adoration. So far as our knowledge goes the same cause always produces the same effect, and as a result of this principle the universe is a majestic and stable edifice, truly a temple of omnipotent wisdom and goodness. Suppose it otherwise. Imagine that the same cause some-

times produced a different effect, and immediately the universe would become a flimsy structure, with shifting foundations, with leaning walls, swaying and tottering amid the winds of chance. If there were no uniformity in law, there could be no acquisition of knowledge, no growth of wisdom, no development of virtue. The physical world would become a chaos and involve the moral world in its ruin.

Suppose that, instead of this majestic and beneficent uniformity which we have learned to trust, God should exempt certain men from the operation of his laws and should give them special power over natural forces whenever they desired it. What would be the result? The inevitable deterioration of all such men. While other men were developing their minds by careful study and their bodies by strenuous exertions, these men with a power greater than that given by the purse of Fortunatus or the lamp of Aladdin, though they could perform prodigies, would remain ignorant children.

If every saint, prophet, missionary and preacher could by prayer suspend or modify the laws when he chose to do so to further the gospel or secure his own safety, the world would soon be in confusion. The desire to

usurp this control over natural forces was a temptation which Jesus twice rejected.

The good luck of slave ships and the ill luck of missionary ships are proverbs among sailors, and their beliefs are, I think, easily and naturally explained. God has no partiality for slavers and no prejudice against missionaries. He lets all ships float or sink according as they are built and sailed. A slave dealer never expects any favors from providence. He knows that if he is to be safe he must watch wind and sea, he must keep a sharp look-out ahead and a good man at the helm. He expects no friendly interposition to save him if his ship is unseaworthy, undermanned, or overloaded.

But in the minds of many people a missionary ship is specially guarded. It has been built by devotion and self-sacrifice, it is going upon a good work, pious men on board daily commit themselves and their associates to God in prayer. All this, though right and laudable in itself, has a tendency to lull vigilance and to diffuse a false feeling of security which only sharp lessons can dissipate. A missionary ship is often too small for the work it has to do because there was not money enough to make it larger, repairs are delayed and

neglected for the same reason, its officers and crew are sometimes chosen for their piety rather than their skill, and yet when disaster comes some people wonder at the mysterious providence.

It is evident that if God did not enforce his laws by sharp and salutary punishment they would be transgressed and neglected more and more. If, for instance, a missionary ship were always preserved from harm, no matter how it was built, manned, and sailed, missionary ships would certainly soon become a very peculiar class of vessels. The apostle James states the true principles when he says: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." A man's goodness in one respect does not absolve him in any other, and his badness in one respect does not punish him in any other.

"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." A profane man, a thief and a liar, if he is a skilled and industrious farmer, will have better crops than his pious neighbor who prays often and sincerely, but who is weak in body, poor in judgment and procrastinating in habit. Do not understand me to say that there is any natural alliance between bad morals and good farming or good anything else. On the con-

trary, virtues are generally found in clusters, yet there are frequent and strange exceptions to this rule, and few persons possess all the virtues in equal development.

It is sacrilege to destroy a venerable ruin, it is infamous to compel men to live in it. Accounts of miracles cannot of course be eliminated from the ancient literature, but they should always be explained in the light of modern knowledge. It may be said that children could not understand the explanations, but they could accept them on authority, as they accept other truths which they do not understand. They cannot understand astronomy, but they are not on that account now taught that the sun revolves around the earth. Nor, though they cannot understand how fairy tales grow, are they now taught that they are true.

Perhaps the most prominent reason for the irrational persistence in untenable opinions by all religious sects is the inherited belief that the laws of nature are capricious and may be modified by incantations and ceremonies. Clergymen have now given up the belief that they can themselves work miracles, but they have not yet surrendered the equally untenable belief that other men in earlier times could do

so. The faith-healer is the legitimate successor of the Indian medicine-man, the African witch-doctor and the Jewish miracle worker. In him creed and practice are consistent. In the ordinary Christian who believes in the miracles of a former day, but thinks miracles impossible now, creed and daily life are illogically separated.

Genesis, Deuteronomy, the stories of Elijah and Daniel, the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have bound men as in a spell and rendered them insensible to science and reason. Imagination has been stronger than sight. Tales of miracles have prevailed over daily observation of the immutability of law.

Paul, though he wrote so many letters and speaks in such detail about his life, never says that he raised any dead or cured any sick people. He besought the Lord thrice for the removal of his own "thorn in the flesh," and got only the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." He had no exemption from disease and pain, nor could he heal his friends, as appears from the letter to Timothy, in which he says: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. 4: 20). His judgment not only in regard to the stories in the Apocrypha of Bel and the Dragon, of Tobit, and of Judith,

but of the legends both in the Old and in the New Testament is expressed in his words to Timothy: "Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness."

The mere fact that there is no argument drawn from miracles by any of the prophets or apostles is enough to show that the accounts of them elsewhere are mere folk-lore and poetry which the great spiritual leaders of the church regarded as crude embellishment more likely to do harm than good, just as enlightened Catholic bishops are now everywhere abolishing many of the more childish ceremonies of their church. Only in backward countries are the images of saints now carried from church to church to visit each other, and that of Saint Peter taken to the sea to catch the first fish and insure a good season by blessing the nets and boats of a community. Dogmatism is offensive. The verdict should not be given till the facts are known and the evidence clear. But extreme skepticism as to the powers of the human mind to discover truth, and extreme timidity and procrastination in proclaiming the results of investigation are, if less offensive, far more injurious to mankind. The properties of a triangle are not

changed by mere enlargement of the scale, and so an induction is often in no way strengthened by the continued addition of new facts. It is not necessary to count the names of all the men and all the women on the registry of marriage to determine that in a monogamous country there are as many marriages of one sex as of the other. The law courts are satisfied with the testimony of a few reputable witnesses, and do not require the evidence of hundreds to support a probable and uncontroverted statement.

A little of the same sort of practical sense applied to theological criticism would be very helpful. What need is there to pile up arguments from remote sources against the credibility of the miracles or to discuss them one by one when they are flatly opposed to the most elementary and common knowledge of our age and country?

We read that King Hezekiah tried to raise the people in his day from superstitious ceremonies to higher and more spiritual forms of worship, and that, "he removed the high places and broke the images and cut down the groves, and broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and

he called it Nehushtan," that is, a piece of brass.

Would that the modern rulers of the church had the same courage, wisdom and piety, and would say "Nehushtan" to every popular fable which now opposes a front of brass to knowledge, morality and religion!

After discussing miracles, or, as he calls them, "powers," Paul says there is a more excellent way. Then follows in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians his sublime vision of the transient and permanent elements in religion. "Knowledge shall vanish away." Or, as we may paraphrase his statement, Our imperfect science will be superseded by new discoveries; but Christianity does not rest upon our present scientific interpretations, nor can it be destroyed by advances in knowledge, for it is a spiritual religion, and after all intellectual changes we are sure that faith, hope and charity will still abide. It is the climax of Paul's teaching, his wisest and deepest word.

CHAPTER IX

PRAYER

THE foregoing view of miracles does not in any way deny or antagonize the belief in the efficacy and duty of prayer. All great works are done in a prayerful spirit, and usually with the accompaniment of conscious and formal invocation.

Belief in prayer is inseparably connected with belief in God; and belief in God is the most rational, universal, and deeply-rooted of all religious beliefs. "*Ex nihilo, nihil fit.*" There can be no creation without a Creator.

Nothing in the uniformity of natural law prevents man from talking with his fellow man, and influencing him for good or evil, and nothing in nature even remotely suggests any impediment to communication between God and man. "Ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psalm 94: 9).

Charles H. Spurgeon, the great preacher,

was once asked if he expected to recognize his friends in heaven. His brief and sensible answer was, "I recognize them now, and I expect to have as much sense in heaven as I have at present."

It is impossible to believe that if God hears the humble, believing prayers of man, he altogether disregards them. Better have no belief in God at all than an opinion of him so unworthy. God is truth, and does not deceive us. God is love, and does not forget us for a moment, or cease to sympathize with our every trial. He is our Father, and is training us in the way he knows is best, however mysterious it may sometimes seem to us. He is as much better than any earthly father as he is stronger and wiser, and the question of Jesus can be answered in only one way: "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?"

That God answers sincere prayer for help to live righteously is one of the very few tenets of the church that will bear the test of the "*ab omnibus, semper, et ubique*" rule. That God pardons the sins of the truly penitent, that he gives power to resist temptation to those who

sincerely seek it, that he gives inward joy and peace to those who walk uprightly, is the universal testimony of Christians of every age and country. There is no counter probability. Many of the well-known phenomena of conversion cannot be explained by mere reflex action upon the mind of man. There is an immediate and often an abounding joy arising from the consciousness of pardon. It is in many cases, I think, as strong, clear, and trustworthy as the consciousness of identity or any other intuition.

Nor is it rational to doubt the efficacy of prayer in assisting man to live a righteous life. The cases in which men who before they began to pray were impure, dishonest and quarrelsome, and who by the habit of prayer have been enabled to live pure, honest, peaceable and benevolent lives are numerous and well-attested, and cannot be denied, however they may be accounted for. There was a time when every Methodist church could show many such cases. Such wonderfully-transformed and wonderfully-sustained characters are now common in the Salvation Army. Such power still attends some evangelists, and will always attend those who do not shun "to declare the whole counsel of God," and

whose own lives are consistent with their teaching.

But omnipotent as sincere prayer is, the mere service of the lips in which the heart is not engaged is of little use to man and of little merit in the sight of God. Real prayer and sin, recognized as such by the conscience, cannot long co-exist, for either prayer will kill the sin or the sin will kill the prayer.

The necessity and the value of prayer are not only facts of Christian consciousness, but are supported by the convictions of our common humanity in every age and country.

CHAPTER X

THE VISIT TO NAZARETH

Not long after the opening of his public ministry Jesus made a visit to his old home at Nazareth. He had suddenly become great and famous, but it was not an ostentatious desire to dazzle his former associates that led him to the little village in the mountains. It was the strongest and purest of natural instincts, the yearning for home. Doubtless he came primarily to see his mother and his brothers and sisters. He wanted also to see his old friends and to look again upon the scenes inseparably associated with the early hopes and visions which had now in some measure become realities. His heart had often burned within him in the old workshop and upon the mountain's brow, as he had mused upon the prophets of old and hoped some day to tread in their footsteps.

Doubtless, too, he wished to proclaim here as elsewhere his great message, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." If he had not so wished, it would nevertheless have been hard

for him to resist the importunities of his old neighbors, who were curious to hear the announcement which had caused such excitement elsewhere. When the Sabbath came and Jesus, as he had been accustomed, went to the synagogue, everybody in the village followed. The preliminary services were little heeded, but there was a great buzz of expectation when Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah a description of the Messiah and his mission, and then boldly affirmed that in himself that prophecy was fulfilled.

For a little while astonishment at his daring and admiration of his eloquence were the predominant feelings of his hearers, but these were soon supplanted by unbelief and indignation. Old opinions and modes of thought are not easily changed. In the minds of men in middle life those whom they first noticed as boys always remain boyish and immature. It is only in the rarest cases that older people can believe that younger ones are wiser than themselves in any really important matter. They always look patronizingly on youngsters, concede their bodily activity and strength, and, more rarely, their intellectual promise, but they pity the inexperience of youth and think complacently of the treasures of knowledge that years have

brought to themselves. The old people in the synagogue at Nazareth could not shake off their preconceptions. Jesus was to them only a forward youth.

Perhaps the young men were not much better pleased. We all hear with more complacency of the success of entire strangers than of our own rivals. The success of a soldier wakens the jealousy of a fellow soldier, but stirs up no resentment in the breast of a civilian. The lawyer is not stung by the reputation of a physician as he is by the brilliant success of a brother lawyer whom he knew in poverty and obscurity. If others move forward faster than we do, we seem to ourselves to be going back, and are chagrined and disappointed accordingly.

The congregation at Nazareth soon took offence at the presumption of Jesus. They said in substance, What ridiculous claims he makes! Is he not a common carpenter? Are not his brothers and sisters very ordinary people? How does he dare to proclaim himself a prophet and a wonder worker?

Matthew and Mark say only that the Nazarenes were offended and that Jesus could effect few cures there because of the unbelief of the people. Luke says that the indignation of the

people was so great that they made an attempt upon the life of Jesus. The mob took him to the brow of the hill and was about to throw him down headlong when some word or act or look deterred them.

A merciful provision in the old Jewish law forbade the seething of a lamb in its mother's milk. It would have been sad indeed if this Lamb of God had perished at Nazareth.

CHAPTER XI

THE CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES

Soon after Jesus had begun to preach, John the Baptist was cast into prison, and from his lonely dungeon sent an almost despairing inquiry. Hunger, cold, darkness, solitude and inactivity soon shake the most resolute spirit, and John, the bold prophet of the desert, had wavered during his captivity. His solicitude was not for his life but for his reputation and his work. He wanted to know that he had not lived in vain, that his message had been true and that the kingdom of heaven was really coming upon the earth.

John had been the predecessor of Jesus and had been the first to recognize his call as a prophet. John was his spiritual father and had given him the only ordination as a preacher that he ever received. For a while they had both proclaimed the same message. Now John was thrown into prison, and the most ordinary human foresight must have made Jesus reflect that he, too, would probably soon share the same fate.

It was another test of his resolution, and he did not shrink. Instead of lowering his tone and becoming more politic and conciliatory in order not to attract attention or give offence, he was obviously stimulated to new zeal, for Mark makes the imprisonment of John the date of the formal inauguration of the public ministry of Jesus.

It marked another stage in the growth of his conviction of his Messiahship. As long as John was actively and successfully preaching "the kingdom of God," Jesus could not feel the same burden of responsibility as when he was left quite alone. But John was now silenced, and no other voice had taken up his message.

One who can do a needed work naturally feels that he ought to do it, and from that it is but a short step to the belief that he is personally called of God to do it. So the imprisonment and inability of John made Jesus feel that the progress of the work depended upon him, and he accordingly took measures to extend and perpetuate it.

A modern thinker who wishes to give effect to a theory or bring about a reform has facilities unknown in earlier times. He sends articles to the newspapers and magazines, or he gives

public lectures or he writes a book, and in this way secures a full and accurate presentation of his views. But in earlier times teaching was chiefly oral, and in order to prevent the speedy distortion of his sayings as they passed from mouth to mouth it was necessary for a teacher to train a body of disciples so that they should understand him thoroughly and be able after his death to expound and defend his doctrines.

Jesus, accordingly, from out the large number of his more constant auditors and followers chose twelve as his special disciples, that he might prepare them to be his apostles.

It is noteworthy that he selected a large proportion of fishermen. The sea of Galilee is relatively small, yet it is large enough to justify the words of the Psalmist: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." There are no atheists among sailors. Men who habitually live in the presence of God's great works are almost necessarily devout. Atheism is born in great cities where men can control heat and cold and light and darkness. A Nebuchadnezzar walking in security and ease in his capital may say proudly, "Is not this

great Babylon that I have built?" but a man in a boat is in a humbler mood. To a sailor, man's strength is but little compared with the powers of wind and wave, and all his works seem small when he stands beneath the stars. Jesus chose fishermen because he found them strong, courageous, straightforward, and devout.

The apostles were not all fishermen, but none of them were professional scholars. Jesus had the distrust of the schools and the technically educated, which was natural to a self-taught artisan, and his instinct was correct. A long course of literary training makes men timid and fastidious in action. They are acquainted with so many precedents, they are hampered by so many canons of criticism, they are awed by their knowledge of the vast ramifications of existing institutions, they remember past failures,—they know too much, and are "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." There is a touch of Hamlet in almost every great scholar.

Some scribes of this sort, with the natural curiosity of their class, were among his constant attendants, but Jesus chose none of them, and in the few cases in which they offered themselves he rejected them. He was afraid

not only of their timidity, but of their sophistications. Their old opinions would leaven their new doctrines.

The wise teacher did not wish the apostles of a spiritual religion to be men whose minds were full of ceremonial superstitions and whose modes of thought and action were fixed by the almost indestructible tyranny of habit. Accordingly he selected no scribes. He did not accept any men who had even been strongly under the influence of the ecclesiastical doctrines and routine. Sturdy republicans are not bred in the atmosphere of courts, or uncompromising moralists in the purlieus of temples.

Jesus chose his disciples not from Judea but from Galilee of the Gentiles, from men far removed by race and place from the false traditions, the rigid formalism and the greed and corruption he wished to overthrow.

The Jews considered that a Jew who consented to become a tax-gatherer for the Romans had denied his nationality and his religion. A publican was no better than a heathen. He was classed with the grossest sinners. Yet Jesus chose "Matthew the publican" as one of his twelve apostles.

There was a class of fierce patriots—zealots they were called—who advocated armed resist-

ance to the Roman government. They would pay no taxes and were consequently outlaws, and whenever possible they emerged from their mountain or desert fastnesses and raised the standard of revolt. The power of Rome crushed these rebellions with merciless severity, but fanaticism is not easily subdued, and new leaders soon arose and gathered new bands. It is significant and interesting that Jesus was not repelled by this type of mind. He did not distrust the zealot as he did the Scribe and the Pharisee. Zeal, however misdirected, is a good quality. Every virtue may be grafted upon its vigorous stem, and so, though Jesus saw how impracticable these zealots were in their resistance to Rome, yet he saw also their indomitable love of truth and justice, and looked on them, I imagine, with pitying admiration.

The fact that Jesus chose Simon the Zealot as one of the twelve suggests that he saw in him a spirit very much like his own at a more immature period. Jesus was not only the Lamb of God, he was also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. That vehement indignation against all wrong that led him to drive the hucksters and money-changers out of the temple and to denounce the ruling Scribes and

Pharisees as hypocrites and vipers, must sometimes have been stirred against the political oppressors of his country. I cannot believe that he was indifferent to political liberty or that he approved of the Roman yoke. On the contrary he was a more ardent patriot even than Simon the Zealot, but he saw, as Simon did not see till taught by Jesus, that moral freedom must precede all genuine political emancipation. Wordsworth and Tennyson in their early years were both, as is well known, in favor of forcible revolution, and, if the inferences drawn from the choice of Simon as a disciple are correct, Jesus passed through a phase of experience not unlike theirs.

Beside the fishermen, one of the disciples was a tax-collector, one had been a revolutionist, and it is probable that one at least was a foreigner. Philip is a Greek name, and when on one occasion some Greeks wished to see Jesus they requested Philip, as a fellow-countryman, to introduce them and probably to act as their interpreter. Jesus was in all probability of purely Jewish descent, except for the remote mixture of the Moabitish blood of the noble Ruth, but he had been brought up in Galilee of the Gentiles and accustomed to look on men of different nationalities without preju-

dice. In fact in few things is the inherent greatness of his mind more apparent than in his attitude toward foreigners. He rose singularly above the prejudices of his race. He found his highest examples of faith in a Roman centurion and a Phœnician woman, and his supreme illustration of brotherhood in a Samaritan, all of which is a distinct anticipation of the noblest work and thought of the noblest minds of later times. That love which Jesus bore to man as man without regard to race or nationality has ever been the stimulus of the liberator and the philanthropist.

Jesus was one of the few Jews who had taken to heart the teaching of the Book of Jonah, that wonderful satire in which some broad-minded and warm-hearted man holds up to deserved ridicule the narrow type of prophet who did not want the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs with Israel and who cared more for his own reputation than for justice and mercy, and would rather see a city destroyed than that his prediction should be unfulfilled.

In his early modesty and caution Jesus had tried to limit his work to Jews only, and said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and had commanded his disciples "not to go into the way of the Gentiles

or enter into any city of the Samaritans," but his innate generosity and daring soon widened his plan from one of national to one of universal regeneration. His love was one that "collective man" could not fill and is expressed in the belief of the disciples that they were to "go into all of the world and preach the gospel to every creature." His sympathies were not only with all classes but with all nationalities.

The work of Jesus was nobly carried on after his death by the apostles whom he himself chose, yet a volunteer who never saw his face in the flesh "labored more abundantly than they all." How much smaller would have been the influence of Socrates without the exposition of his doctrines by Plato and the anecdotes of Xenophon, and of Jesus if Paul had not "filled up what was lacking" not only in the suffering but in the purpose of Jesus! The world is infinitely in the debt of that fiery enthusiast who threw away with noble contempt his birthright, his learning and his office, counting them but as dung and as dross, that he might become a servant of Jesus Christ. Sublime self-abnegation! Perfect illustration of the truth of the Master's words, "He that loseth his life for my sake [i. e., in my way]

shall save it," for Paul, giving up all, has gained all and stands forth forever at the right hand of Jesus as his immortal associate and second self.

CHAPTER XII

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WOMEN AND CHILDREN

JESUS loved children with a peculiar affection, and looked upon them with wonder and reverence. When some of his disciples showed a selfish, ambitious and quarrelsome spirit, and, bringing their differences to Jesus, asked him, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus called a child to him and said, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted (i. e., changed altogether in spirit and purpose) and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The disciples did not readily apprehend the lesson, and, though Jesus was in general patient with their dulness and mistakes, their conduct on another occasion greatly offended him. Some fathers and mothers had brought young children that he should touch them, but the disciples apparently thought other claims upon the Master's attention more important and "rebuked them." But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased and said unto them,

"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them."

Sensitiveness of temper and love of beauty are characteristics of women and of poets. Jesus understood and loved women, and women understood and loved him in return. He had none of the masculine disdain for the intellect of woman that was and is common in Oriental lands and not unknown in western ones.

The gospels contain many incidents that show the marvelous delicacy, sympathy and tact of Jesus in his association with women. Jesus had his inner circle of friends, Peter, James and John among men, but it is said also that he loved Mary and Martha, and of these he preferred Mary, who refreshed his spirit by sympathy, to Martha, who cared more for his bodily comfort and less for his spiritual ideals.

Nothing places the general attitude of Jesus toward women in a stronger light than the contrast between him and his greatest apostle. Paul was a self-sacrificing and heroic man, full of fire, eloquence and devotion, but as compared with Jesus his nature was narrow and one-sided, and his theology was warped and dwarfed accordingly. Look at these

words of Paul: "A man ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Cor. 11:7-9, Revised Version). Contrast this legend of the creation of woman after and for man and its legitimate inference of woman's essential inferiority with the words of Jesus: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." Here the legend of Eve's later creation is quietly thrust aside and instead of man's headship Jesus teaches man and wife the duty of mutual dependence, equality and love, such as he remembered in the home at Nazareth.

The quick sympathies of Jesus went out to the individual soul. What wonderful accounts the gospels give of his power to restore self-respect and revive hope in women out of whom he had "cast seven devils." One of the most interesting of these is his conversation with the woman of Samaria. Jesus was weary with his journey,

and during the noon-day heat was resting himself by Jacob's well. A woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. She was surprised that a Jewish rabbi should condescend to speak to a Samaritan woman, and her answer showed both gratification and curiosity. Her eagerness and kindness were very refreshing to the tired prophet. She asked questions; and every true teacher longs for intelligent and sympathetic listeners. Jesus would not so often have repeated the exhortation, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear," if he had not often been grieved and discouraged by seeing that many of his hearers were inattentive and indifferent. Every true teacher welcomes small opportunities and single auditors. Jesus did not reserve his efforts for great multitudes or the select company of his disciples, but wherever there was a needy and receptive soul, no matter how exhausted the Great Teacher might be, he exerted himself to enlighten and to help. Such a listener and such an opportunity he found here. He had often been irritated by opposition, wearied by dulness and pained by incredulity, and the quick sympathy, the intuitive apprehension and the tactful and deferential questionings of this warm-hearted

woman drew from him an explicit assertion that he was the Messiah. Who does not know this fascinating and sympathetic type of woman to whom men reveal those daring plans and visions that they hide from the smaller faith and blunter frankness of their own sex?

The conversation is given in outline only, but enough is said to enable us to understand how such a woman, quick of apprehension, warm-hearted, impulsive, prompt and energetic in action, as capable of enthusiasm in virtue as in wickedness, should at once become not merely a believer and disciple, but a busy and zealous missionary.

Still more wonderful is the story of the woman taken in adultery. How many persons there are who will privately show a sympathy with the erring which they are ashamed of in the presence of a hostile public opinion! It is indeed no easy thing to brave the frown and the reproach of the leaders of the church and of society, but Jesus met this as he met the other tests of a reformer, with tact and courage. The Scribes and Pharisees declared that the woman's guilt was undeniable, and, as Shylock appealed for his pound of flesh by the danger that would fall upon the charter of Venice if it were refused, so these prototypes of Shylock

dared Jesus to break the cruel Jewish law as they hissed through their teeth, "Moses commanded that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?" He said nothing, but wrote upon the ground. They continued asking him, and at last they got their answer: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone." The accusers were convicted by conscience and slipped away in shame one by one till Jesus was left alone with the woman. Then came the peace-restoring, hope-reviving words, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." I should like to know that woman's subsequent history. One thing I feel assured of, she never forgot the command of Jesus or betrayed the confidence he had placed in her.

Then, as now, the Master's faith and courage were greater than those of his disciples, and, as Farrar's *Life of Christ* explains in detail, it was long before the story received official and popular sanction and was inserted in all copies of John's gospel.

The family is the corner stone of all virtue and progress. Greek civilization fell because it did not place woman on an equality with man. Mohammedanism has the same fundamental and fatal weakness, has reached its

limit of growth, and is slowly sinking into decay. It cannot elevate men because it degrades women, and by God's law in nature, husband and wife, mother and child, cling together for good or for evil.

It is the glory of Jesus that he built his religion upon the home as truly as upon the individual conscience and upon the church. He loved and honored man, and he loved and honored woman, and men and women have vied with each other in returning him love and honor, and not seldom in this loving emulation, woman's intuitive and impassioned loyalty has outdone, outdared and outsuffered man's colder and more calculating devotion.

The gospels are the most condensed of all records, and their meaning must be brought out by meditation. But the full force of some passages only women can understand. No man can know all that lies hidden in the few references to Mary Magdalen and Joanna and Susanna, and the many other women who ministered unto him by their substance and by their service. The Master and his apostles were fed, his seamless robe was woven and lovingly embroidered by woman's hands, his feet were washed, his head was anointed by woman. Women wept as he was led to crucifixion, they

stood beside his cross, they tenderly prepared his bruised body for burial, they watched beside his tomb, they first proclaimed his resurrection. Men forsook, denied and betrayed him, but no woman ever faltered in her love and loyalty.

CHAPTER XIII

PETER DECLARES JESUS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

In gathering disciples about him in order to spread and perpetuate his doctrines, Jesus was only following the common precedent of the times. Every rabbi of note had his body of disciples, some companies like those of Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hillel being very numerous. His manner of teaching, however, was far bolder, more authoritative, and attractive than theirs, and his success with the common people much greater. The multitudes who followed Jesus must in most cases have left some other teacher in order to do so, and men, even good men, do not usually see their influence lessened and their sources of income diminished without jealousy and exasperation. As a result of these feelings, these rabbis frequently attempted to check the work of Jesus. They acted in fact very much as the clergy of the established Church in England acted toward the early Methodist preachers. They were jealous of him. They were doubtless largely sincere in their opposition. We all

too easily believe ill of those who are working us manifest and great injury, and it is not at all surprising that as soon as the fame of Jesus spread abroad and multitudes flocked from all parts to hear him that the regular clergy promptly began a vigorous opposition. And to jealousy was soon added a dread of his power which deterred those who might otherwise have been well-disposed from any attempt at patronage. If there was any such attempt it was too insignificant for notice. The gospels tell us only of opposition. They say that priests demanded of Jesus by what authority he taught, that they challenged the truth of his doctrines, denounced him as a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, a wine-bibber, an impostor and son of Belial.

Jesus had many an encounter with the various types of inquisitors, from the dullest and most obstinate formalist to the keenest and most unscrupulous lawyer, but, like Lincoln, he was never worsted in debate. Yet controversy, however successful, always chafes the mind and exhausts the energies, and Jesus had many an hour of weariness and dejection, as opposition revealed to him the stupidity and perverseness of the ruling classes.

Success brought another trial perhaps hardly

easier to bear. All sorts of ignorant and worthless quacks clumsily imitated his methods and brought discredit upon them. The impatient disciples forbade them, but Jesus, though he doubtless sighed inwardly as he thought how these people were distorting and caricaturing his words and his acts, knew that these grotesque shadows must precede the dawn, and told his followers to cease from a useless opposition. "He that is not against me is for me."

A yet harder trial was the opposition of his own family. His mother and his brothers attempted to lay hold of him and put an end to his career. The reports brought to them that he had set up as a teacher and healer, was constantly followed by an infatuated rabble, and was everywhere denounced by the priests and rulers as a false prophet and "son of Belial," must have been very painful indeed to that simple-minded, God-fearing household. Loving and self-sacrificing as a mother is, it is very hard for her to think of her son, whom she remembers as a helpless baby and whom she taught to lisp his first words, as a great and wise man. If a nation proclaims him great and does him honor, his mother acquiesces with joyful humility in the popular verdict. And the popular verdict, if adverse, is equally

potent. When the rulers and the multitude join in condemning a man as a crazy enthusiast, how shall the mother of an imaginative child who remembers all his wild dreams, all his absurd fancies, all his foolish boastings, free herself from the fear that he is still only dreaming and boasting as he used to do before the little curly head sank into the soft slumber of childhood? The very depth of her affection increases her solicitude. It must have been a sad journey when Mary set out with her other sons to lay hold on Jesus because he was "beside himself." Better, far better, honorable death than shame or insanity. Perhaps the sword that passed through Mary's heart at the tidings that led her to leave Nazareth in search of the son who was reported mad was the sharpest that ever pierced that patient and loving heart. But the church for obvious reasons has not made it the crown of her sorrows. It has been passed over in the enumeration of her distresses because it is quite inconsistent with the legendary account of the miraculous birth of Jesus. If Mary knew that an angel had announced the birth of her son and that he had had no human father, she would have hailed with joy his entrance upon his mission and no opposition of priests or people

would have troubled her in the least, for women are sure and steady in their intuitions and affections.

The soul of Jesus was troubled. As in the case of Paul, "without were fightings, within were fears." Every sane man sometimes doubts the correctness of his own opinions and methods, if they are rejected by the majority of men, and especially if they are opposed by the recognized leaders and teachers of the time and by those whom he loves and who love him.

Jesus was often tempted to stop, to distrust his own opinions and to yield to the authority of the learned and the voice of numbers. He had long believed that he had a mission, and at times his belief as to his duty seemed clear beyond the slightest peradventure. Then again the opposing opinion of others and fears and discouragements growing out of weariness and disappointment had obscured his faith and driven him in trouble of soul to solitude and prayer. It is significantly recorded that after the great temptation following his baptism "the devil departed from him for a season," but as the ocean labors long after a storm and as storm succeeds storm upon it, so the agitations of the human heart subside slowly, and the wild currents of thought may at any time

again lash the emotions into new tumult. These repeated agonies of doubt, the common experience of all real martyrs, were a large element in the suffering of the "Man of Sorrows."

His sanity had been questioned, his brothers and his mother had attempted to restrain him, the Scribes and Pharisees, the leaders of the church, had denounced him, he was looked upon as a dangerous agitator, a man who "had a devil," by the respectable elements of society; he was followed by crowds who wanted to be fed or healed or to see him work miracles, and who were disappointed because he did not satisfy their love of the marvelous or cater to their vulgar greed and ambition.

He said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah." He grew heart-sick and wondered whether he had not been deluded by the voices and whether the task he had undertaken was not too great for him, whether his supposed Messiahship was not a failure and a dream.

It was in an hour of deep despondency that he asked his disciples what people were saying about him and who the multitude thought he was. The answer was, "Some say that thou

art John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." These answers all mean that the multitude had no faith in his Messiahship. In the opinion of all he was but a forerunner, and the heart of Jesus sank still more. Scarcely daring to ask the question for fear that an adverse answer might be another and almost intolerable discouragement, he yet pushed his inquiry further and said, "But who say ye that I am?" And Peter, divining in some way the doubt and fear that troubled his Master's heart, replied impetuously, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The word of encouragement was sorely needed and gratefully received. It soothed and refreshed the chafed and weary spirit of Jesus. To be believed in even by this little band was enough. The good seed had taken root, and would multiply. His work would be continued after his death, which from the power and exasperation of his enemies and from the fate of previous prophets he saw could not be far off. He was conscious that he was a king of men, and he saw but one vacant throne. He obeyed the outward guidance of events and the voice of God in his soul, and, with sublime faith and dim yet glorious prevision of the world-wide extent

and age-long duration of his spiritual kingdom, he accepted the heaviest burden of responsibility, the lowest deeps of shame and suffering and the highest exaltation of glory known among men—he was obedient to his heavenly vision, he accepted the appointment of Son of God and Son of Man.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRANSFIGURATION AND SECOND COMING

The declaration of Peter marks an important stage in the life of Jesus. It filled him with new life and joy. As Columbus and Balboa were thrilled with delight at their great discoveries, so Jesus, now that the foundations of his church were laid, saw in vision the great and enduring edifice that was to be, and he rejoiced. The joy of his soul changed even the appearance of his body. His face was illuminated and radiant. At least this is what I take to be the simple fact upon which the story of the transfiguration which immediately follows is based. It does not explain the story of the transfiguration to say with Strauss that as it is reported that the face of Moses shone after he had spoken with God, so the disciples of Jesus would naturally invent a similar story about him in order to make him as great as his predecessor. Biographical frenzy and poetic imagination account for infinite embellishment and exaggeration, but they

need some material upon which to work. The mighty wings of the imagination must always have some medium in which to exert themselves, some hints and analogies from actual life. Pure fiction is very rare and very insipid. As Dante's visions of hell darkened his face as with the smoke of the pit, and lurid fires seemed to smoulder in the depths of his troubled eyes, so the glories of a redeemed humanity, of a happy earth the inhabitants of which should never say, I am sick; of a world free from weariness and pain and sorrow and sighing, the vision of the kingdom of God upon earth, the vision of celestial glory, lighted up the face of Jesus and made it beam as the face of no other ever shone.

Whatever may be the exaggerations of fancy the old painters would not have put a halo around the head of every saint, if there were no fact at all to be expressed by the symbol. What is the veil of flesh that it should obstruct the light of the soul?

Like circumstances produce like effects, and there was a transfiguration of Jesus as there was one of Moses caused by "the abundance of revelation given unto him."

What might have been expected occurred. Jesus enlarged his work. In addition to his

twelve apostles he appointed seventy other persons and sent them out two by two to preach and heal. As his own mind became more clear his preaching became more urgent and impressive. He warned men that the day of grace would not last forever, but that a day of judgment would surely come and might overtake them at any time. Especially he mourned over the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, in which he had preached longest and where most of his great works had been performed. He went again through the cities and villages teaching. As Paul afterward warned every one "night and day with tears," so Jesus, in parable after parable and exhortation after exhortation, sought to bring men into the kingdom of God before it should be too late. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Seek first the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." Regard not the opposition of friends or kindred. "He that loveth father or mother or wife or child more than me is not worthy of me. . . . He that taketh not up his cross and followeth. after me cannot be my disciple." He was pressed in his own spirit, and said to his disciples, "I came to send fire on the

earth and it is already kindled." "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" "Whosoever denies me now before men, him will I also deny before my Father in Heaven." He declared that he would come again in glory to judge the world and that all nations should be gathered before him, and that he would separate the righteous from the wicked as a shepherd "divideth his sheep from the goats," caring nothing for their professions, but regarding or punishing them according to their deeds. Those who had fed the hungry, clothed the naked and visited the sick and the prisoners should be recognized as his disciples and should enter with him into his glory. Others, no matter how wonderful their works, how loud their professions, or what their respectability and standing, were not his and would have no share in his triumph.

Here Christ assumes his kingship over men. Here is his supreme statement of his authority, but how significant are its limitations! When he was asked by his disciples, "When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" his answer was, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in

heaven, neither the son, but the Father only." (Matthew 24: 36 and Mark 13: 32.) And of the limitations of his knowledge and his liability to error the context furnishes us a marked example, for Jesus repeatedly declared, "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done." The phraseology reported by Luke is even more definite and emphatic and runs thus: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." In accordance with these declarations Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "We say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them that have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." Almost every epistle in the New Testament bears similar testimony to the belief of the primitive church that Jesus would return attended by angels to gather his elect before all of the first generation of his

disciples had passed from earth. Alas! is not this the constant error of the finite mind that it measures everything by its own little scale, forgetting the sweep and the grandeur of the designs of the omniscient and omnipotent God to whom "one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as one day?" Ought not the divine Workman to take infinite time and infinite labor, if need be, to make his work perfect, rather than by some short and easy process reach a less satisfying consummation? Do we not require even a human artist, one who paints a picture or carves a statue, to take all the time needed to do his best, and shall not the same rule apply to the almighty Fashioner of the souls of men? But every human reformer, with pathetic weakness and impatience, wishes for a quicker movement of events and a clearer vision of their results than it seems best to the infinite Wisdom and Goodness to afford.

Another declaration made at this time is also important as throwing light on the consciousness of Jesus. A certain ruler, alarmed, it may well be, by the sermons on the coming judgment and attracted by the bright visions of the coming glory of Christ's kingdom, asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit

eternal life?" As Jesus had before disclaimed perfect knowledge, he now disclaimed perfect goodness. "Why," he said, "callest thou me good? none is good save one, that is God." Account for it as we may, the holiest minds are ever the most abased at the sense of their own unworthiness. When Paul was a proud, persecuting Pharisee breathing out fire and slaughter and making havoc of the church he "verily thought he was doing God service." Later he boasted of his apostleship. "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeys often, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea; in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." Yes, here was heroism, and Paul's boast, "I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," is just. Yet, though stung sometimes by detraction and opposition into thus asserting his claims, Paul's mood whenever he turns from human to divine standards is more hum-

ble, and he declares, "I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God." As the ordinary flame of a lamp or candle when placed in front of a calcium light appears like a black spot, so the holiest men have always felt most painfully the contrast between their actual thoughts and feelings and the standard of purity and virtue of which they conceive and for which they long.

I think we find the climax of Paul's religious experience in the words to Timothy written when he was Paul the aged, when his good fight was almost fought out and his strenuous race almost run. Then there was no self-satisfaction, no boasting of manifold labors and sufferings, no claim of apostleship, nothing but a vision of God's wonderful and unmerited grace through Christ to sinners, "of whom," said he, "I am chief." I think that this was the mood of the Master also when he said, "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, that is God."

CHAPTER XV

THE FINAL PREPARATION OF THE APOSTLES

When the nervous forces are exhausted by labor and conflict or by too much introspection, God's sovereign remedies are the sea, the field, the forest and the mountain. In the presence of God's grandeur things are seen in their true proportion, a disturbed and jaded mind recovers its tone, and the strongest and noblest minds are lifted above themselves.

Such solitary retirements to the desert or the mountain for communion with God were frequent with Jesus, but just before his last journey to Jerusalem he withdrew from the world rather for the sake of his apostles than for his own necessity or enjoyment.

If the order of events in the gospel of John may be relied upon, even after Jesus had uttered his last discourses in Galilee and manifested his power to the utmost, his own kinsmen still remained incredulous. They said to him tauntingly, "Depart hence and go into Judea . . . for no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly," for, as

John adds, "Neither did his brethren believe in him." It was from his own painful experience that Jesus learned the truth that he so often and variously declared that in spiritual, as in other things "a man's foes" are sometimes "they of his own household." If there was such distrust in his natural family, could he be sure that the faith of his spiritual family was fixed and would remain unshaken in the hour of supreme trial? So, knowing the human mind and its vacillations, and remembering how long and severe had been his own temptations before his course became clear to him, Jesus prudently determined before declaring himself the Messiah in the capital, and as he foresaw suffering the prophet's martyrdom, to retire once more to some secret place with his disciples and teach and encourage them alone as he could not when thronged by the multitude. The disciples were doubtless much agitated by what they had heard. They also had had their share in the work of preaching and healing, and were worn and jaded by the long journeys and constant labors of the preceding weeks. Accordingly Jesus again, as so often before, said to them in loving words, "Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile." Jesus is not a jealous and inexorable tyrant

wringing the uttermost penny of tribute, the most intense exertion of every power at every moment in his service, but, like the Almighty Father, he pitieth them that fear him, and his "yoke is easy and his burden light." "Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile," he said, and the weary disciples gladly responded. Doubtless Jesus himself yearned also for sympathy and companionship, for the kind looks, the loving words, and the affectionate caresses of his familiar friends to whom he could unbosom himself as he could not to "the world." In this retirement before the last stern trial there was a divine wisdom and prudence.

Prudence is a very ambiguous word. Sometimes it means a cold, calculating selfishness that saps the strength of generous resolve and heroic action. Of this sort of prudence Jesus had none. "He that saveth his life shall lose it," was the way in which he expressed his deep conviction on a question he had doubtless often considered from every point of view. But prudence is sometimes not cowardice but foresight. It then has a place among the intellectual and even among the moral virtues. In this sense Jesus was prudent, and to the taunts of his incredulous kinsmen he gave only the significant answer, "Mine hour is not yet

come." Like a wise captain he drilled his soldiers before he brought them under a sharp fire. In these quiet days he doubtless gave them much instruction, for his mind was full and at last he had left much unsaid only because they could not yet bear to hear it. These last opportunities were very precious because they must be few and short. To delay long in retirement would cause the multitude to forget him, would undo his work and in fact be an abdication of his claim as Messiah. To precipitate a fatal conflict with the authorities before his disciples were prepared in mind and heart would be to ruin everything at his own death.

Like Lincoln's delay in issuing the emancipation proclamation till he had the support of the nation, it was judicious deliberation. As it was, one disciple betrayed, another denied, and all forsook him. Had he led them earlier to the supreme ordeal Peter might not have been alone in his denials or Judas in solitary infamy in his treason.

The mind of Jesus was far-seeing and sagacious. He expected no ends without the use of adequate means. The man who started to build without counting the cost, or the king who with an army of ten thousand ventured to

encounter one of twenty thousand, he called fools. In a parable of Browning-like audacity he even commended the one good quality of a despicable thief and liar, the unjust steward, who acted promptly and energetically and did not waste time in regrets and dreams. It may reasonably be asked why Jesus did not take the time to write a book which should contain a full and clear statement of all his doctrines. Why did he not write a code of laws and a concise interpretation and comment? Why did he not at least gather and edit his discourses, parables, beatitudes, proverbs and sayings? I do not think that his failure to do so was the result of neglect, or procrastination or due to unexpected and premature death. I think that he clearly foresaw his death, and that he made what seemed to him to be the best arrangements for perpetuating and extending his work and those arrangements did not include the writing of a book. His purpose was to produce a higher type of life in the individual and in society, and in order to do that he preferred suggestive general statements to a precise and formal code of laws.

If Jesus had written a formal code or system it would have shared the fate of all other codes and systems and been gradually superseded

and disintegrated. And this is in fact what has happened to those of Christ's teachings which his disciples have formulated most precisely. Christians have largely explained away the gospel statements about non-resistance, usury, poverty, divorce, the sacraments, the Sabbath and the taking of oaths. The Master's principle is good, but the hard and narrow laws supposed to be based on them have been found intolerable.

When people of a certain type of mind make laws which result in intolerable hardships or absurdities, they do not honestly retreat from their untenable theories, but try to save their credit by some ingenious and casuistical evasion. It was this indirect and dishonest dealing which pervaded the whole Pharisaic system that above all things else provoked the indignation of Jesus. There is nothing else that he says with such repeated and such terrific emphasis as, "Beware of the Scribes, beware of the Scribes, beware of the Scribes, for their leaven, their spirit, is hypocrisy. Woe unto you, woe unto you, woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

With such examples before him of the result of regarding a written law as infallible and unalterable, it is no wonder that Jesus never

formulated his teachings or prepared a code of laws. He wanted to purify and gladden the hearts of men and not merely to control their outward acts, to upbuild human character by filling it with faith, hope and love, and not to undermine it by making change and progress difficult or tortuous. Wise and elastic legislation has its place, but Jesus did not think the legislator's methods adapted to his purpose.

What is perhaps more surprising is that he did not select and arrange his poems, parables and discourses for exact preservation. The work of the great poet is far more enduring, powerful and pervasive than that of the legislator, but all the great poets have felt as Jesus did, that writing was only a means to an end, and that life only is truly great.

Jesus could never have been satisfied to be a mere speaker of the truth any more than a mere hearer of it. He taught men, "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them." He wanted his sayings remembered. No phrase of his is more frequent or significant than, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He told his disciples that he wanted his words to "sink down into their hearts," and he secured just the perpetuation of his sayings that he desired, the preservation of their

substance and vitality and beauty as seed thoughts and not as rigid and obstructive dogmas. In spite of all his precautions and in spite of all the providential variations in the reports of his sayings, we see how "the letter that killeth" has been exalted by many above "the spirit that giveth life." What opposition has been made to astronomy, geology, philology and biology, to ethics and religion, by those who have perverted a body of literature and history into an ultimate and infallible code of law! What royal and ecclesiastical tyrannies, what defence of human slavery, what absurd sacramentarianism, what superstitious rites, have been based upon the supposed finality and inerrancy of Scripture! Men have thought that their eternal welfare depended upon a drop of baptismal water, a morsel of eucharistic bread, a few words of priestly absolution, or the utterance of a set confession of faith. All this is remote from the spirit of Jesus. He attached no importance to forms and ceremonies, and above all he did not attempt to shut all truth in a book, but left the course of progress and discovery open, giving men as their only rule, loyalty to reason and conscience which he believed would "guide them into all truth." This is inductive philos-

ophy on a higher plane than Bacon put it, and ready to yield far greater results. If all men could be persuaded to be wholly loyal to truth in thought, and to justice, and to love in action, how rapidly the conquest of natural forces would proceed and how soon poverty, disease and pain would disappear from the earth and the kingdom of God be established in all lands!

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

If Jesus could have been content to preach the kingdom of God in general terms, without attacking particular abuses or setting up any personal claims, he might in all probability have continued to preach till he died of old age without any more serious molestation from the authorities than he had already met with. Governing bodies dislike trouble and conflict. This was the usual temper of the Sanhedrin. After the death of Jesus it was reluctant to proceed with severity against the apostles and gladly acquiesced in the advice of Gamaliel to let them alone till the results of their work were seen. The Scribes and Pharisees were just as unwilling to bring a popular prophet to formal trial as the Presbyterian General Assembly or the Methodist General Conference to try a heretical professor. Trouble and odium were certain and advantage very doubtful.

But this timidity and temporizing, natural to a council of elderly men, was quite alien to

the temper of Jesus. He was courageous and sincere. He could not evade or postpone what he deemed a duty. He was "straitened," pressed, and burdened in soul, until his work was accomplished. His command to others was, "Let your light shine" and he could not hide his own under a bushel. It was from Jesus that James learned that most searching of all statements in the Bible, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It would have been easier for Wycliffe to have been silent about transubstantiation and to have left the Bible untranslated, it would have been easier for Luther to have expressed his opinions only in an academic way in the classroom instead of nailing them on the church door as a challenge to the world, it would have been easier for John Brown to have hung his rifle on the wall and gone to hoeing corn or shooting rabbits, than it would have been for Jesus to assert his Messiahship only to a circle of his friends or to susceptible inquirers like Mary of Bethany and the woman of Samaria.

And so when Jesus judged that his disciples were sufficiently trained, and that to delay longer would impair their faith and that of the multitude, he felt that his hour was come,

and he set himself to go up to Jerusalem. No strong, young man with the blood of life coursing healthily through every vein can go deliberately to death without some shrinking and reluctance. It was not an easy thing for Jesus to make up his mind to go to Jerusalem and there challenge the authorities to a combat to the death, yet that was what he felt he must do or else renounce his claim to be the Messiah. There was no middle course. He was sent by God with a message to the nation or he had no message to anybody. And so, though he shrank from the martyrdom of his body at Jerusalem, he shrank still more from the martyrdom of his spirit by a failure to accomplish the work to which he felt himself called. The agony of his soul showed itself in his face and manner. When at last he called his disciples to follow him to Jerusalem he had such a look and strode forward with such determination that they were amazed and afraid. (Mark 10: 32.)

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not re-

ceive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this they said, 'Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them even as Elijah did?' But he turned and rebuked them, and said, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' And they went to another village." Surely "he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." But Jesus did not direct his disciples to record this incident. He who never forgot an act of kindness, who appreciated even the gift of a cup of cold water, and who, touched by a woman's impulsive devotion, commanded that "wherever his gospel should be preached what this woman had done should be told for a memorial of her," never desired to perpetuate the memory of an insult or a wrong.

These poor, besotted Samaritans did not know that in repulsing this tired and hungry wayfarer they were rejecting a friend and benefactor, rejecting the man who has lifted the name Samaritan from reproach to honor, and made it synonymous with human kindness. Their petty little race prejudice shut

everything else from their view. They knew only that he was a Jew and was on his way to Jerusalem, and that was enough to condemn him in their eyes. So here as at Bethlehem and Nazareth he was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He turned sadly away and went to another village.

The rejection of Jesus by this Samaritan village was but a prophecy of his ultimate rejection by Jerusalem, as the palms and hosannas which greeted him upon his entry are a prelude to a coming world-wide triumph.

The dramatists and poets who hold the mirror up to nature, and present the great types of human character in their ideal strength and fulness, generally exhibit the leading traits of a hero in minor examples before delineating his crowning achievement. This is obviously wise and truthful, for in the nature of the case no one leaps into excellence of any kind at one bound. Skill comes by practice, strength by exertion, self-mastery by the discipline of habit. It was the common, the daily, habit of Jesus to look with compassion on the mistakes and sins of men, and only because of this habitual and practiced compassion was he able to say even amid the agonies of the cross,

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Hitherto Jesus had avoided public recognition as much as possible. He had said sternly to many whom he had healed, "See thou tell no man." Even when Peter made his famous declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Jesus blessed him for it, he immediately afterward charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ. But now as he drew near to Jerusalem his hour was come and his plan was changed. Fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah, he entered Jerusalem in modest yet royal state. He encouraged the people to shout hosannas to him. Children especially, in their loving enthusiasm, proclaimed him the son of David, and when the angry priests asked him, "Hearest thou what these say?" Jesus answered them, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? . . . And the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord. And some of the Pharisees said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold

their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

He had taken the decisive step. He had crossed the Rubicon. He had burned all bridges behind him. He had proclaimed himself the expected Son of David, the king who came in the name of the Lord. No middle course remained. He must enforce his claim or sink into contempt.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TEMPLE

Jesus had formed his plan and was determined to attack Jewish formalism and iniquity in the temple itself, their central stronghold, and thus bring the question to a decisive issue. When Martin Luther went to Rome and there saw every ecclesiastical vice full-blown, his faith was undermined, and he became a Protestant at heart and ready for resistance when the occasion permitted. Every previous visit of Jesus to Jerusalem seems to have had a like effect upon him. Beautiful as was the architecture of the temple, its beauty aroused in him no enthusiasm. He told the woman of Samaria that it had no special privilege as a place of worship; and, though he wept over the city of Jerusalem, he spoke without a sigh of the destruction of the temple. Perhaps he looked with horror upon it because it was a monument of Herod's crimes and remorse. Herod, the murderer of rivals, of priests, of children and of wife, tortured by the ghosts of the slain, had lavished money on this splendid

edifice in the hope that he might thus atone for sin and find peace of mind. But if no taint of murder and infamy had clung around it, the regular routine of temple services would have repelled Jesus. He sought a house of prayer and found a den of thieves. Keen money-changers and noisy sellers of sheep and oxen filled those cloisters which he would like to have seen occupied by wise teachers and devout worshipers. Worse than all, the temple was defiled with a never-ceasing stream of blood. Though hundreds of years before, David, Isaiah and Micah had declared that God did not desire sacrifices of sheep and oxen but only an obedient and contrite heart, still the repeated declarations of the prophets had not availed to abolish the hideous system, and the greatest prophet of all was forced to look upon bloody and pagan rites which, with the strange tenacity of religious usages, had come down from primeval savagery and, as a horrid survival, defaced a cultivated age.

Jesus must have felt as keenly as any preceding prophet the folly and hurtfulness of sacrifice, must have felt as did his apostles that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, and that the whole system, like all other forms of ceremonial righteousness and priestly

absolution, deadened the conscience, prevented repentance and encouraged men to continue in sin. Yet he did not press his way to the great altar at the hour of morning or evening sacrifice and seek to arrest the arm of the officiating priest as he was in the act of slaying the lamb without blemish. Perhaps he thought that an attempt to do so would fail or would cause a riot in which he might die by some obscure hand in a misunderstood and undignified struggle. At any rate, instead of attacking the central evil, the atoning sacrifice itself out of which many smaller evils had naturally developed, he began his assertion of authority by assailing the more unseemly accessories of the system of sacrifices rather than the offering itself. There was a great and constant demand for animals for sacrifice, and dealers in sheep and oxen and doves had been allowed by the authorities to bring these beasts and birds into the outer courts. These crowded cattle pens, offensive to eye and ear and nose, must have been a great scandal, not only to those who disbelieved in sacrifices altogether, but to all devout worshipers. But the traffic was lucrative, and the authorities, while doubtless sharing in the profits, professed that they permitted the cattle to be there only for the convenience

of those who desired animals for sacrifice. Every Jew was required to pay annually into the treasury of the temple a half shekel of Jewish money, and many made large voluntary gifts, and as great numbers of the Passover visitors were of the "dispersed among the Gentiles," and brought with them only the profane and unlawful money of the heathen, there was a very brisk and very unspiritual business of money-changing always in progresss.

All this cattle dealing and money-changing rightly seemed to Jesus utterly alien to the true spirit of worship. "He made a scourge of small cords, and drove all the traffickers and the sheep and the oxen out of the temple; and poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence." It was a strange scene.—the vehement young prophet with his uplifted scourge, used perhaps on the backs of sluggish oxen but not needed against men, for the most callous butcher and the most heartless Shylock were startled for a moment into shame and fear by the indignant look and the clarion voice of the lion of Judah, and fled in all haste. But they soon rallied and demanded protection in the privileges for which they had paid. The priests and elders promptly re-

sponded to the call, and sent a strong deputation to inquire into the matter. Conscious of their own participation in the guilt of the traffic, they did not like to encounter Jesus on this issue, yet they were not willing to surrender their illicit gains and to submit to an emphatic public rebuke without a struggle.

So the chief priests and the elders, venerable in their robes of office and attended by an imposing retinue, came to Jesus as he was talking to the great crowd that the excitement had gathered, and with magisterial formality demanded by what authority he had acted and who gave him that authority. To face this august body, reinforced doubtless by an angry crowd of the expelled cattle-dealers and money-changers, was a sharp test of the sovereignty Jesus had just permitted his disciples to proclaim, yet he met it with skill and courage. But circumstances were now very different. Enemies and not friends formed the majority of the crowd, and many sympathizers and friends were doubtless overawed or perplexed at the sight of the priests and the elders. When a private man opposes a large body of officials there is a strong presumption against him. Jesus felt this and so, instead of nakedly asserting that he was the Messiah and

had been sent by God to set up a kingdom, an assertion which might have given the authorities an opportunity to arrest him for blasphemy, he asked them a question about his predecessor John. Was John sent by God? They were thrown into confusion by the question. They dared not say Yes, for John had testified of Jesus. They dared not say, No, for the multitude considered John a true prophet. There was an awkward delay while they reasoned among themselves, and the multitude began to wonder and the more irreverent to laugh at their confusion. When at last the answer came, "We cannot tell," their discomfiture was complete, and even the very tipstaves and bailiffs who attended these dignitaries must have laughed at their ludicrous helplessness as Jesus said in turn, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." They were so confused and crestfallen that they had not even the sense to beat an immediate retreat, and Jesus in searching and terrible parables showed them that they were worse than the publicans and the harlots, and that the opportunities which they had abused would soon be taken from them.

They withdrew at last in fright and anger with the words ringing in their ears, "The

kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." But their rage was for the time impotent, for "when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet." It was necessary and it was congenial to use policy. Could they not beat this audacious orator at his own game? Among all their veteran casuists was there no one who could outwit this inexperienced and unlearned young man? "They took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk."

They framed a shrewd plot. Every patriotic Jew longed for the deliverance of his native land from the Roman yoke. It was warmly debated whether to pay tribute to Cæsar was not apostasy from Judaism. The extreme zealots refused to pay the hateful Roman taxes, and others did so with misgiving and under compulsion. Some wily lawyer, experienced in all the arts of cross-examination, suggested to his associates that they ask Jesus whether such tribute was lawful or not. If he says, No, the Romans will arrest him for sedition. If he says, Yes, he will destroy all his claim to be regarded as a patriot and leader. His popularity will cease and his pretensions to be the

Messiah collapse. To throw Jesus off his guard the priests and elders did not go themselves, but entrusted the execution of the plot to disciples whose youth and apparent ingenuousness might lead Jesus to give a full and circumstantial answer. And so these apt young learners in the school of hypocrisy came up to him with the appearance of the deepest concern and as though the question weighed heavily upon their consciences and they had vainly sought relief elsewhere, and said, "Master, we know that thou teachest the way of God in truth and carest not for any man. Tell us, therefore, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" Quick as a flash Jesus saw who had sent them and what their purpose was, and he said sternly, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?" They did not like the turn things had taken and began to forebode disaster, but they could not refuse to answer so plain a question, and they said unto him, "Cæsar's." And then came the simple and crushing statement of Jesus, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Then the young men

had their answer, and, crestfallen, they left Jesus and went their way and reported the matter to the elders.

Countless millions have read with delight of the baffling of these old intriguers. It is indeed a beautiful and wonderful thing to see how native purity and sense are often more than a match for the most crafty and experienced villainy. Thus the painters make the youthful archangel triumph over the grim and gray arch-fiend.

The next attempt to discredit Jesus as a teacher came from another quarter. The very same day the Sadducees, who denied that man had a soul or would live after death, on the ground that nothing to this effect is revealed in the law of Moses, came to him and tried to reduce the doctrine of the resurrection to absurdity by putting the case of a woman who had had seven husbands. Whose wife was she to be in heaven? He told them that "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Having answered the direct question of the Sadducees, Jesus next replied to their concealed innuendo that there was no resurrection, and easily showed that if there is no formal statement in the Old Testament of

the doctrine of a future life, it is frequently implied. He took for illustration the familiar phrase, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and added, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Thrice had Jesus signally and conspicuously defeated and silenced his opponents in debate, "and after that they durst not ask him any question at all." More than this, some of the younger and nobler spirits among the Scribes accorded him a generous admiration, and added, "Master, thou hast well said."

It was perhaps this evidence of susceptibility to nobler feeling among the disciples of the Scribes and Pharisees that led Jesus to utter his tremendous denunciations of those "blind guides," those "hypocrites," who "were shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither going in themselves nor suffering those who would go in to enter." In the most terrible stream of invective in literature, beside which the Philippics of Demosthenes, the orations of Cicero against Catiline, the impeachment of Hastings by Burke seem tame and colorless, Jesus, rising in a steady and awful climax, called down woe after woe upon those "whited sepulchres" fair without but within

full of "all uncleanness." Eight times, almost as if he intended to make a formal contrast between these maledictions against the sinner with which he closed his public ministry and the beatitudes upon the righteous with which he had opened it, eight times Jesus repeated with ever-increasing emphasis, Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Disciples and descendants of the murderers of preceding prophets, "fill up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!"

It was strange language to address to a body of doctors of divinity and ruling elders in the church. Is there not something startling and appalling in the fact that the gentle and merciful Jesus who so readily pardoned the thief and the adulteress, and who never uttered a harsh word against those whom we are accustomed to think of as the vicious and criminal classes, but was so pitiful toward their failings that he was called the friend of sinners,—that the patient and hopeful Jesus should think the state of these Scribes and Pharisees so hopeless? Does it not suggest that as love is the supreme and central virtue, so cold, calculating, respectable selfishness is the cardinal and damning sin? It is at any rate matter for deep thought that all

Christ's severe denunciations were visited upon priests, teachers of the law and elders in the church, upon professedly religious and outwardly respectable people. And indeed it is clear that such people, being above others in knowledge, opportunity and privilege, ought to be much better than others or they are much worse.

How these priests and lawyers in their robes of office, these teachers accustomed to the meek interrogatories of their pupils, to the submissive obedience of their servants, to the awe of the common people for their "broad phylacteries" and reverend aspect, how these men, blown up with pride by the breath of prosperity and applause, must have been startled at the first words of public rebuke they had ever listened to! In their own opinion they were not very bad. Some of them doubtless thought themselves good. Others who had qualms of conscience now and then as they "devoured widows' houses" and then "for a pretense made long prayers" had grown into their hypocrisies so gradually and had become so hardened in them by habit, that they were quite comfortable.

As Jesus turned their corrupt hearts inside out, some of these men as they winced and

cowered saw for a moment all their foul deformities, and saw, too, in swift, bright vision, the long-forgotten aspirations of innocent boyhood, but in most cases the moral fibres had been too long unstrung for any strong and sincere response to a call to repentance. Pride is a stubborn and pugnacious devil, and it soon rallied every other evil spirit in human nature to its support. The breach between them and Jesus was irreparable. Their authority had been shaken to its foundations. Another such assault might overthrow it. Jesus must be silenced at any cost, and so "the chief priests and the scribes and the elders assembled at the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and *kill him.*" "The righteous is an abomination to the wicked." Yet these warnings and denunciations were not without good effect. They not only strengthened the faith of the older disciples, and fixed that of newer ones, but they were seed sown for a future harvest, for we read in the Acts that "a great company of the priests" became obedient to the faith.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST SUPPER AND FAREWELL

When, in humiliation and anger, the Pharisees left him, Jesus saw very clearly that they had exhausted their verbal strategy and that their next attempt would be a violent one, and that it would result in his death. He could not be consistent with his claims and character and either fly or resist. To save his life by flight would be to lose what was dearer to him than life, the accomplishment of his appointed task. To fight would be a still more fatal error. Force, "the last argument" of earthly kings, proves nothing. If Jesus had called his followers to arms, he would in all probability have been defeated, but, if by any possibility he had won victories in war, they would have done nothing to prove the truth of his doctrine. He would have established a fatal precedent, and, instead of the unique and sublime moral eminence he now has, he would have had only the lurid and ever-dimming fame of the Arabian fanatic whose angry appeal to the sword has drenched so many lands in blood.

There was no course open to Jesus but to stay where he was and prepare the minds of his disciples for the worst. His own conviction that he was the Messiah was now complete. It had acquired the strength of habit, it was supported by the recognition of disciples, above all it had been fused and hardened in the fierce fires of opposition. The ordinary accretions of thought are like the gentle deposits of the aqueous rocks; and, like the friable sandstone, yield to influences as gentle as those which created them. But those convictions that have been formed in the furnace of suffering and persecution are like the igneous rocks hardened by volcanic fires and the pressure of mountain weights.

Jesus had greatly longed to complete another Jewish year. The passover season was endeared by the memories of childhood and associated with every feeling of patriotism and religion. He felt sure that the Jewish ritualism against which he had preached was soon to fall, and that the daily and yearly sacrifices would cease. He knew that his death would form a new epoch in the national life, and he desired to link the future to the past as closely and tenderly as possible in the minds of his disciples and their successors.

Accordingly, as they were eating the paschal supper, "Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

In two respects this figurative language has been perverted. The words, "This is my body," have been understood literally, and the doctrine of transubstantiation has been built upon them. It would be just as sensible to take literally and materially the words, "I am the door," "I am the good shepherd, " "I am the true vine," "I am the way!" When we consider how boldly figurative the language of Jesus habitually was, how he told men that faith, like a grain of mustard seed, could remove mountains, when we reflect upon his frequent use of such paradoxes as, "Let the dead bury their dead," it seems strange that the figure, "This is my body," naturally suggested by the occasion, should have been made the warrant for the monstrous doctrine that every time a priest utters a certain formula of consecration over a bit of bread it is transformed into the body of Jesus. This seems to me mere fetichism

and magical incantation, and infinitely removed from the spirit of the religion of Jesus.

But the Protestant can throw no stone at the Catholic in this matter, for he perverts just as grossly the clause, "shed for many for the remission of sins." It was inevitable that after the death of Jesus those who sought to abolish the Mosaic sacrifices should declare that Christ was the Lamb of God and that now that he had been offered there was no need of further sacrifice for sin. The figurative language is beautiful and appropriate, but it is a strange distortion of its meaning to get out of it the doctrines of vicarious atonement and imputed righteousness.

The life and death of Jesus have awakened many to righteousness and turned many from sin. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church"; and the blood of the central figure in human history has, more than that of any earlier prophet or later apostle, roused men from the living death of sensuality, greed and worldliness, and brought them into the life of righteousness. It has produced that penitence, faith and effort which have, by God's grace, loosed the yoke and remitted the guilt of sin, but it is for no one a substitute for his personal righteousness.

On this farewell occasion Jesus performed another beautiful symbolic act. After the supper he "laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself, and poured water into a basin and washed the feet of his disciples." It was fitting that he who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister" should make his last act one of humble service. On their way to Jerusalem the apostles had contended among themselves as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and Jesus had said to them, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant." On another occasion, as we learn from Paul, who had received by tradition the precious saying not recorded in any of the gospels, Jesus had declared, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To give is a paternal, a kingly, a godlike act; to receive is a childlike, a subject, a human act. The recipient can but show gratitude, while the benefactor shows mercy. So Jesus, the king among men, made himself as the humblest servant and girded himself to wash the feet of his disciples.

CHAPTER XIX

JUDAS ISCARIOT

It does not appear that Jesus made any exception, but washed the feet of Judas in his turn. Perhaps he hoped that it was not even yet too late by an act of love to calm the perturbed spirit and win back the lost affection of the wretched man who betrayed him.

But Judas had determined upon his course, and the touching incidents of the last supper only increased his anger and alienation. The same flower-juices that the bee transforms into honey the spider distils into venom. The gospel of the kingdom that was to lift the other disciples to righteousness was to sink Judas into deeper sin. As far as Judas was concerned, Jesus had preached in vain that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth" but in the state of his heart and mind; that men's lasting treasures were in heaven, and that those who

hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed. To Judas "the kingdom" had seemed to be the real and great thing. The beatitudes and spiritual ideals were to this worldly man amiable extravagances to be tolerated only because they might be useful in winning men into the kingdom. He was the treasurer and carried the bag, and as long as there were great crowds of enthusiastic disciples and as the contributions of the wealthy men and women who ministered unto Jesus flowed in freely, Judas was well satisfied. But when it became more and more evident that Jesus really meant to sacrifice himself to these impracticable ideals and expected his followers to do the same, Judas rebelled. He was a disciple for office and power and wealth, and events had gradually opened even his eyes to the fact that he could not obtain them as a disciple of Jesus. Then he was one of those men who are thrown into an agony by the smallest word of censure. A little while before, Mary had broken a box of precious ointment on the head of Jesus, and Judas had murmured about it as a waste and with hypocritical compassion had said that it might have been sold for the benefit of the poor. Jesus had gently and sadly replied, in effect, I shall not be long with

you, Judas, you need not grudge me this tribute of love; but the rebuke, mild as it was, had rankled in the vain man's breast. He was a thief, too, and his guilty conscience perhaps saw suspicion in these words.

Moreover, he was the kind of man who liked to stand well with the authorities, and the recent breach of Jesus with the rulers had greatly shocked him. It became his conviction that Jesus was embarked in a foolish and desperate venture, and that all who stayed with him would share his destruction, and he determined to save what he could from the wreck. So he went to the chief priests and bargained with them to betray Jesus into their hands. "And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."

It is at once the most shameful and the most niggardly bargain in history. For once the greed and cunning of Judas were overmatched, and it was when he met the greed and cunning of corporate wealth.

Judas had pledged his word, and if he had a passing pang of remorse he quenched it by the thought of this obligation. Jesus had watched him during the supper. He saw that he was unrepentant and joined to his idolized money. It was useless to strive longer, and Jesus drove

him forth with the words, "What thou doest, do quickly"; and Judas, in a tempest of inward rage but with a simulated calm that deceived the other disciples, left to complete his infamous agreement. He fled, as did Satan from Paradise, to return no more.

His name is the most execrable in human history, for he violated the most sacred obligations to the noblest of masters, apostatized from the lowest motives and in the meanest and most detestable manner.

The withdrawal of Judas was a relief to all the company. Sorrow had seized the hearts of the disciples as Jesus had declared that one of them would betray him, and now that the traitor was gone, Jesus comforted them with tender words. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Continuing his farewell, he said in substance, I am only going before to prepare a place for you. I shall watch you, I shall be with you; whatever you shall ask me, I will give you. The work I have begun is of God, and "he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." . . . "My Father is greater than

I . . . ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." . . . "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

CHAPTER XX

GETHSEMANE

Jesus had thought through every problem of man's life. He saw very clearly from thousands of examples that goodness and truth do not secure a prophet against opposition and persecution; but that, on the contrary, the greater and more active a good man's virtue is, the more likely he is to arouse the hatred of all bad men whose gains and influence are threatened. The righteous are an abomination to the wicked, and the wicked will do their utmost to rid themselves of what they hate. An actively good man must expect to be assailed by bad men in property, person and reputation. Jesus has warned his followers of all this, and one of his most comprehensive precepts is, "Fear not them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." To kill the body is after all a small thing. Epictetus said to the tyrant who threatened him with death, "You may kill me but you cannot hurt me." The immortal mind is un-

impaired by death, nay, its knowledge and power are enlarged when it is "from its prison released and freed from its bodily chain." Jesus not only says that the soul cannot be hurt, he says that the body cannot. "There shall not a hair of your heads perish." The mortal body itself, in that spiritual revivification of which the new birth of trees and flowers is but a faint foreshadowing, will live again in richer glory, for after its sowing in corruption it will be raised in incorruption. "Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words." The belief in immortality is necessary to man's happiness and progress. There can be no solid virtue unless men fear dishonor more than death; but life with all its drawbacks is so sweet that if death should be believed to be extinction, the desire to cling to the present life would be injuriously strengthened by that erroneous belief. A man whose faith it is that time is but a part of eternity, and that this life is a probation, has immeasurably stronger motives to virtue than a materialist who has the gloomy and despairing opinion that death ends all.

It may seem strange that after Jesus' had comforted his disciples there should have been any further wavering or fear on their part, and

still stranger that after he had said, "Let not your hearts be troubled," he should himself have passed almost immediately to the supreme agony of Gethsemane. But these revulsions of feeling will seem strange only to those who are superficial observers of the human heart. Objects change their appearance as we draw nearer to them. That which at a distance we contemplate with philosophic calm rouses very lively feeling when we are face to face with it.

The apostles had seemed firm in their faith and courage in the light and cheerful upper room, but as they came out from the friendly shelter into the chill air to take what they had been forewarned was their last journey with Jesus, their courage began to ooze away. Jesus marked the change in face and manner and said to them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night." It was not said in reproach, but to warn and strengthen them, and led by the impulsive Peter each one said, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." "Then cometh Jesus with them into a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith

he unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. . . . And he went a little further, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me· Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

There has been much discussion as to the meaning of the expression "this cup." I think, however, that its meaning is made clear by comparing it with similar expressions used elsewhere. There is a legend in the Talmud to the effect that the angel of death at first slew men with a sword, but that in compassion a cup was substituted. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read that Jesus "tasted death for every man." From these passages it seems clear that the cup from which Jesus shrank was the bitter cup of death. If his spirit had not thus shrunk from "leaving the warm precincts" of this house of clay, Jesus would not have been the highest type of man. He loved humanity and the work he wished to do for it. Could that work not be accomplished equally well in some other and less painful way than by his premature and violent death? That, I take it, was the burden of his agony. But the greatness of his shrinking from death is the measure of the greatness of his faith and obedi-

ence. The spirit triumphed over every bodily weakness. If Jesus had not wished to escape from suffering and death, there would have been no merit in his obedience to conscience. It is this sensitive heroism that appeals to us. If he had been without hopes and fears, he would have been insipid as a character and useless as an example.

For wise purposes, the law of suffering seems to be as universal and inexorable as the law of gravitation. The very Captain of our Salvation was made perfect by it; and each soul on its way to strength and joy must pass through its Gethsemane.

Whatever may have been the pangs of conscience or of fear in the mind of Judas as he took his solitary way through the shadows to keep his wicked covenant, the evil elements in his nature still had the mastery, and as Jesus, strengthened by prayer, returned to his weary disciples, Judas appeared with a company of armed officers sent by the chief priests and elders. Coward as he was in everything good, he was bold in his baseness. He came forward with an impudent pretense of loyalty and said, "Hail, master!" and kissed him. The officers approached and Peter drew a sword and made a momentary effort at resistance.

But Jesus told him to put his sword into its sheath. He surrendered himself, "the disciples all forsook him and fled," and the officers led him away to a travesty of a trial.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRIAL

When a single man opposes society, when with a new idea he attempts to set aside long-established usage, it is by most men taken for granted that the single man is wrong. This judgment, natural to all men, is doubly potent and binding in the case of the officers who are charged with the duty of maintaining the existing system. Some charity is due even to the chief priests and elders who made the greatest blunder and committed the greatest crime in history.

Even if the chief priests and elders had not been "stirred up with hatred and revenge" because they had a few days before been publicly rebuked as hypocrites, as whited sepulchres and as vipers, it would have been impossible for such a body of men to have given Jesus a fair trial. Only a few earnest men keep their minds constantly open to new truths. The great majority settle into grooves of opinion along which they run smoothly and out of which they can scarcely move at all.

There were in that assembly half-blind, mumbling, toothless old men, with decayed intellect and dulled sensibilities, mere drift-wood upon the stream of time. There were bold, adroit, unscrupulous men, resolved to maintain power and privilege at any cost and ready unhesitatingly to sacrifice any one who threatened to cross their path and thwart their plans. There were narrow-minded bigots, sternly orthodox, and utterly unable to see even the possibility of error in the established creed or to imagine a higher type of faith. To dare to question tradition, usage, and the wisdom of local majorities is always shocking to some minds. Those persons who decide by reason and evidence are few. Men, like sheep, mostly follow leaders. Those who to-day are shocked at a denial of Christ's supreme deity would have been just as much shocked at the first assertion of it. The other name for orthodoxy is conservatism; and conservatism, like the centripetal motion of the earth, represents only half the force that directs the true course of events.

As for any real examination of the merits of the case, Jesus might almost as well have been tried by a tribunal of foxes, wolves, and bears, so swayed were the members of that assembly

by low cunning, by greed, and by hate. What a ghastly farce that trial was! A wise, pure, benevolent man before that crowd of extortioners, drunkards, adulterers, scheming politicians and blind devotees. Most of them doubtless sincerely thought that they were putting down a dangerous agitator and bold blasphemer, and regarded their own lapses from morality as venial peccadilloes in comparison with his dreadful and subversive impiety. A small number, perhaps, regarded him with pity as a poor, deluded fanatic whom they would gladly have spared, if he could have been induced to take advice and abandon his preposterous claims. If Joseph of Arimathæa, "a counsellor," and Nicodemus, "a ruler," just and good men, and if the prudent and merciful Gamaliel who later prevailed upon the Sanhedrin to let the apostles alone, if these or others like them were in the assembly that condemned Jesus, it does not appear that they uttered a word in his behalf.

The governing spirits of the assembly had convened it on purpose to put Jesus to death. They had taken counsel together as to how they should do it. They had bribed Judas to betray him and they had suborned false witnesses to testify against him. It was a pre-

meditated judicial murder with a cut and dried program. But, while justice and mercy were trampled upon, the forms of law were scrupulously respected. It was necessary to the comfort of that body of lawyers that the proceedings and the record should be regular. They might murder a man, but must not omit a technicality. So the perjured witnesses were called; but they had been badly coached or were dismayed by their surroundings, so that their testimony was contradictory and ineffective. It seemed almost as if after all they might have to let Jesus go with some light punishment, for want of a definite and serious charge against him.

It is one of the clearest of proofs that Jesus had never claimed to be God that his enemies in the extremity of their embarrassment and anger never made any such charge against him. That charge had indeed once been made in the heat of debate, but Jesus had shown so unequivocally that he only claimed to be the Son of God, and that similar titles had been borne by others, that his accusers on this occasion did not think it worth while to repeat a charge that he would surely again disavow. They took hold of his rhetorical expression, "Destroy this temple and I will build it again in

three days," but apart from the uncertainty of its meaning, if the worst and most literal construction were given to it, the offense of speaking thus was not capital.

To prevent the breaking-down of the prosecution, the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." To this direct appeal an answer as direct was given. Translating the words of Jesus into a modern equivalent, they are, You have spoken truly, and hereafter you shall yourself see me sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. The high priest dramatically rent his clothes and said to his associates, He has spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict? They answered, He is guilty of death.

The court doubtless heard the confession of Jesus with a great sigh of relief. From the confusion of the witnesses and the indefiniteness of their testimony, the priests and elders had begun to fear a long and tedious trial and the possible final escape of the prisoner.

Jesus never surrendered his convictions either to mobs or to governors and stands as

much for independence of thought as for righteousness of act. The court held that his confession brought him under that terrible law against heresy found in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, even if the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams. . . . That prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death."

Deuteronomy is not a Mosaic book, but was written in the time of Josiah to aid in the extirpation of idolatry and the establishment of the national church. It accomplished the desired ends. Like the Spanish Inquisition, it stopped the growth of many mischievous errors, but at the terrible price of preventing the development of new truths. Wheat and tares alike were cut down by the same remorseless scythe of bigotry. When, at the instigation of the Westminster Assembly, Parliament passed the dreadful statute by which any one who denied the inspiration of the Scriptures or the doctrine of the Trinity was to be put to

death, the wise Cromwell uttered the far-sighted protest, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you think it possible that you may be mistaken."

But no such spirit as that of Cromwell and his fellow Independents tempered the furious fanaticism of Judea. What would it have availed for Jesus to have given them a sign when the law expressly said that they were to disregard all signs? They were proof against conviction, like the juryman who naively said, "I had made up my mind and the evidence could not shake me."

The fact is that the preaching of the kingdom of God by this audacious mechanic threatened all the sources of wealth and power that the chief priests and elders possessed, and it is not in ordinary human nature to give up its privileges and means of livelihood without protest and struggle. Jerusalem was a sacerdotal city. Probably twenty thousand people were dependent directly or indirectly for their honors and income upon the existing ceremonies and interpretations. A radical change might mean "a clean sweep," and the mob that howled, "Crucify him, crucify him," when Jesus was brought before Pilate, was just such a mob as Demetrius the silversmith gath-

ered at Ephesus with the watchword, "Our trade is in danger." The Christianity of Jesus was not mere singing and praying, was not dreams and ecstasies, was not a long, elaborate and speculative creed, was not quiescent opinion, but was hard, constant, practical work in clothing the naked, in feeding the hungry, in teaching the ignorant and prejudiced, in healing the sick, in doing good in all possible ways, and in opposing evil in high and low places at all times and at all hazards. It was not a theory of agriculture. It was ploughing in the cold; it was reaping in the heat, it was weeding and pruning and grafting and manuring. It was the hard, plain, disagreeable but necessary work of life.

Jesus was not crucified for uttering beatitudes or for healing the sick, but for assailing the abuses connected with the Sabbath, the Temple, the sacrifices and the Law, abuses by which large numbers of influential men obtained their wealth and honors. The priests and scribes who condemned him were fighting for their position and interests just as a modern political ring fights civil service reformers, or as the southern planters who owned slaves and the northern merchants who sold them supplies, fought Lovejoy, Garrison and

Sumner. It is the old sad story of human folly, selfishness, and wickedness. As those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were not sinners above all other Galileans, so the men who condemned Jesus acted only as others of their class have acted under similar tremendous temptation. It is easy for us all to condemn the sins of other people, but the just law of Jesus is, "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Looking back upon the crucifixion, now that Jesus is seen to be the foremost man of the race and his precepts the greatest source of happiness and progress in human history, the folly and wickedness of those who condemned him to death seem inconceivable. Yet who can see the oak in the acorn? Who in the sight of the overpowering present has any vivid sense of the distant future? Men who are amazed at the stupidity and wickedness of the Pharisees and Sadducees who rejected and condemned Jesus, will themselves reject without a moment's hesitation and, as they profess, without the slightest misgiving, the present natural development and practical application of the principles of Jesus, will in fact reject him as completely as did their predecessors in office. A House of Lords and a board of bishops are

still very conservative bodies, and have little patience with radical reformers.

That a man is antagonized by society is of course not in itself any proof that he is a reformer or a righteous man. The way of transgressors is hard, and most men who are put to death by human law perish because they disobey divine laws and run against "the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler." Most men who stand alone against the world are fighting vainly against "the stars in their courses." But though criminals far outnumber martyrs, society is not excusable for its mistakes, nor is the disciple of Jesus at liberty to surrender his convictions to the authority of the leaders of opinion or to the multitude. Jesus, foreseeing that he would be crucified if he persisted in declaring and acting upon his conviction, snot only continued his preaching and work and gave men an example of loyalty to conscience, but said in express and emphatic words, "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me cannot be my disciple." His test of the human spirit is very searching. Man is called to battle to the death not for a positive knowledge of absolute truth but for his own deliberate judgment, though he knows that it is incomplete and liable to error. Not

a single soldier in all "the noble army of martyrs" who pre-eminently praise God and exalt man, died for the whole and exact truth. Each one died for the little glimpse and fragment of truth that his soul had received, died for the love of a small and imperfect vision of good, died hungering and thirsting after a righteousness to which he had not fully attained, died to receive the blessing of the great chief Martyr of the race and Captain of our Salvation.

If the modicum of truth for which he suffers and dies is too small and too much alloyed to be recognized by the busy world, the would-be martyr changes into the poor, scorned heretic. Yet these younger and less fortunate brothers of the apostles, less happily tempered and less favored by circumstances, are doubtless as sincere as their wiser fellows and though they bring no fruit to perfection will be recognized by the righteous Judge as having labored in the vineyard. Though they seem not to have "beaten their music out," but only to have made discord amid the harmonies of faith, yet if they have but "endeavored with sincere intent" they will have the rich reward of those who do what they can, for by the just Judge it is required of a man according to what

he hath and not according to what he hath not.

The best and noblest man that ever lived was put to death because stupid men could not learn, because proud men would not stoop, because rich men would not disgorge ill-gotten gains, because revengeful men could not forgive.

CHAPTER XXII

PONTIUS PILATE

THE Jewish Sanhedrin voted that Jesus was guilty of heresy and blasphemy and ought to die, but, as Judea was a Roman province, the council had no power to carry its sentence into execution. It therefore took Jesus before the Roman governor and requested him to put Jesus to death. Pilate was at first disposed to refuse their request and, indeed, to think very lightly of their accusations. Like other educated Romans, he was accustomed to great latitude in philosophical speculations and was tolerant toward all religions. As a Roman governor he maintained toward the religious beliefs of the conquered Jews a neutrality very much like that of an English governor of India to-day toward the views of Hindoos and Mohammedans. Pilate was quite indifferent to the opinions and ceremonies of the Jews. Like Gallio, he "cared for none of those things." But if indifferent in matters of mere opinion, he was watchful in regard to all

treasonable or seditious acts, and when the rulers accused Jesus of claiming to be a king he was at once aroused. He questioned Jesus and was relieved to learn that the kingdom in question was purely spiritual. His Roman sense of justice again asserted itself, and he declared to the accusers, "I find no fault in this man"; but they were urgent in declaring that the pretensions of Jesus to kingship were dangerous to Roman sovereignty. "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend." Pilate trembled at these words. The cruel and suspicious Tiberius was upon the throne and Pilate knew that if he seemed in any way to countenance or wink at the claim to sovereignty of any rival, his imprudence and negligence would be quickly punished by deposition or death. Moreover, the attitude of the Jewish priests and of the rabble influenced by them was so threatening that Pilate feared a revolt. He tried to placate them by a nominal condemnation to be followed by the release of the prisoner as an act of grace. He sought to appease their hate by scourging Jesus, but all in vain. They were implacable and cried out continually, "Crucify him, crucify him." It was much against Pilate's sense of justice to accede, and he vainly tried to rid himself of

responsibility by washing his hands before the multitude and declaring, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." Though all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children," yet Pilate did not transfer his guilt to them, but must be joined with them in condemnation. He doubtless also said to himself in palliation of this judicial murder, It is better that one man should be unjustly condemned than that an insurrection should be provoked in which many persons would be killed. It is thus that men tamper with conscience and find specious excuses for their sins, abusing their reason by compelling it to find reasons for their inclinations. Every judge is ultimately judged. Pilate, like Belshazzar, has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. His baseness sprang from weakness and fear. Christian legend says that he was ever afterward haunted by remorse, and that, like Judas, he ended his days by suicide. However this may be, it would have been well both for his peace and his fame, if he had not been called to face a crisis to which he was not equal.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CRUCIFIXION

When the sentence of crucifixion had at last been wrung from the reluctant Pilate, Jesus was delivered to the soldiers. Before executing the sentence, these brutal men, with the connivance if not at the instigation of their superiors, mocked and tortured their patient and unresisting prisoner. "They stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him and took the reed and smote him on the head."

Human nature is capable of strange extremes. At its best it is little lower than the angels, at its worst it is little better than the beasts. Soldiers sometimes become indifferent to the sight of blood and agony; nay, there are cases in which men have learned to delight in the spectacle of human suffering. "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not

inquire wisely concerning this." Nothing better measures the moral progress of nineteen Christian centuries than the increased sensibility and compassion of man. There are still dreadful isolated cases in which prisoners accused of peculiarly revolting crimes have been tortured by mobs, but the whole official and popular sentiment is different. Prisoners of war and professional gladiators are no longer "butchered to make a holiday." Modern compassion barely tolerates capital punishment of any kind, and where the death sentence is still permitted society requires that it should be as painless as possible; but the hard heart of antiquity sought to inflict the utmost measure of pain and degradation upon the wretch whom its harsh laws condemned. Under the teaching and example of Jesus, man has done much to "work out the beast" and "let the ape and tiger die."

The brutality of the soldiers toward Jesus did not, however, spring altogether from mere wanton cruelty and love of boisterous sport. Jesus suffered from their ignorance and race prejudice. Jewish rebels and pretenders to sovereignty had caused the Romans much trouble and loss of life and kept the army in a constant state of exasperation; and it was in

part to avenge fallen comrades and to humiliate a hated class that Jesus was reviled and beaten. The ignorance and stupidity of men cause them to class together under the same name persons whose character and purposes are utterly diverse. Hard and cruel as these poor soldiers were, if they could have looked into the heart of the Son of Man and seen that he was indeed the friend of sinners, there was not a man of them who would not have shown him kindness instead of insult. But alas! the vices and mistakes of the great are as contagious as their virtues and wisdom; and these rude soldiers, though they must have been perplexed at the mild and benignant aspect of their prisoner, took it for granted that in spite of his gentle looks he was the troublesome and dangerous rebel he had been condemned by the authorities as being. Looks are deceptive. There is many a mild-mannered cut-throat, and the mistake in regard to Jesus is of the same character as the subsequent one in which Paul was supposed by a Roman captain to be the Egyptian chief of an army of four thousand murderers. (Acts 21: 38.)

After the soldiers had mocked Jesus they led him away to crucifixion.

The faith and fortitude of Jesus had remained

unshaken during these dreadful indignities and tortures. His physical strength even was not altogether exhausted, for when at last the soldiers, tiring of their cruel sport, led him away he was able for a time to carry alone the heavy cross on which he was to suffer. A great company of people followed him, and many of the women, with the natural tenderness of the sex, wept and lamented. When one has suffered pain and wrong, a sudden and unexpected manifestation of sympathy often causes a revulsion of feeling that completely destroys self-command. The disciples of Jesus had forsaken him, the priests had condemned and reviled him, the soldiers had mocked and scourged him. After many hours of neglect by friends and jeering and beating by enemies, there came, like sunshine after storm, looks of pity and words of kindness. The tradition that Veronica, one of these compassionate women, wiped the sweat and blood from the face of Jesus is in all probability true, for the act is womanlike. Jesus was deeply moved, but he was not unmanned.

On his way to the cross Jesus spoke to the sorrowing women in the lofty poetic language habitual to him, in sentences not less balanced and figurative than those he had been wont to

use in the days when he "rejoiced in spirit." Deeper and more beautiful than the retention to the last of his wonted manner of speech was the persistence of his life-long habit of care for the welfare of others. Almost the last words of him who came "not to be ministered unto but to minister" were a lamentation over a doomed city and a warning to his hearers to escape from it. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me but for yourselves, and for your children," is but an iteration of the compassionate cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The sad procession at last reached the bald summit of Calvary, and there Jesus was stripped of his garments and nailed to the cross.

Crucifixion inflicts unnecessary and wanton pain. It leaves the vital organs unimpaired and usually produces death by sheer force of protracted suffering. The blood oozes away drop by drop from the pierced hands and feet, every nerve shoots and tingles with pain, the throat is parched, the veins are swollen till they seem about to burst.

The mysterious law connecting mind and body, by which at times each overpowers the other, was not broken in the case of Jesus. There is a limit to human power. There is an extremity of physical suffering which the mind cannot resist.

Jesus had believed that if he prayed to the Father his prayer would bring legions of angels to his assistance. But he had refused to ask for them and had prayed only, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." Still it is evident that he had not ceased to think some interposition possible, and when the hours dragged on and at last it broke upon him that he was to be allowed to die in agony and shame with no sign that heaven in any way regarded him, his faith and courage were shaken and he broke forth into a bitter cry of doubt and fear. The tragedy of life is not the death of the body but the anguish of the soul when it loses faith in God and hope for man. Jesus had lived for many months in a state of spiritual exaltation. He had heard himself called the beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased, he had had ecstatic visions and an ineffable peace and joy in communing with God and in praying and in teaching his

disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And now came the rude shock. Instead of these delightful meditations and hopes, instead of applauding multitudes and docile disciples, he was in the power of cruel enemies, he had been derided and scourged, and was hanging in torture upon the cross.

Intolerable agony wrung from Jesus the despairing words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The eclipse was but for a moment. Jesus had pierced more deeply into the heart of the great mystery of pain than any other. He knew even better than Paul that in some way he was to be "made perfect through suffering." Even in that dreadful hour he saw "the joy that was set before him and endured the cross, despising the shame." Serenity and faith returned. He cheered a humbler fellow sufferer, a common thief, by assuring him of God's mercy and of future life; he prayed for the pardon of his murderers, and then, as was most fitting, his last earthly thoughts turned to the subject of his first consciousness. As the great soul of Jesus sank beneath the earthly horizon, it turned again to the gentle and beautiful being whose loving face,

whose low, sweet voice, whose tender caresses and unwearied ministrations formed the first impressions upon his infant mind. The pain was forgotten, the multitude before him faded from view. In imagination he was once more in Nazareth, in the quiet home in the green valley, surrounded by the white hills. He was a child again with his mother's hand upon his head. Then the obliterated years rushed back. Consciousness of his present situation returned, but recollection had performed its kindly ministry. The promised light had shone at eventide, and the last moments were peaceful. He commended his mother to the care of his youngest and best-beloved disciple. With deep joy he received the inward assurance that his work was finished and permanent, and, like Paul, no longer counting his life dear unto himself, he passed peacefully away with the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The noblest human life was crowned by the most patiently heroic death.

Imagination has been busy with the death as well as with the birth of Christ. An early legend incorporated into the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke says that there was darkness at midday for three hours. The tradition is

akin to Milton's fancy, that when Adam ate the forbidden fruit,

> "Earth trembled . . . . and Nature gave a groan,
> Sky lower'd, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
> Wept at completing of the mortal sin
> Original."

Other early legends say that many of the dead arose, and that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, God thus signifying that the Holy of Holies, into which only the High Priest had been allowed to enter, was now open to all, and that Judaism having fulfilled its mission was now abolished, being merged into Christianity as the glory of the morning star fades at the rising of the sun.

Another Christian legend relates that all the gods of the heathen fled from earth vanquished and terror-stricken at the moment that Jesus exultingly said, "It is finished."

But to the ordinary observer everything remained as it had been before. Nature continued her majestic course without a tremor or a shadow of change. Even the political and ecclesiastical worlds went on without the slightest apparent modification. The smoke of the morning and evening sacrifices still ascended. The pomp of the temple service was undiminished. The golden bells still

tinkled and the pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet still gave "glory and beauty" to the robe of the High Priest as he walked in full-blown pride, just as though he had in no way sullied the motto, "Holiness to the Lord," which he wore engraven in gold upon his breast.

The great choir of Levites sang as before, Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? In glorious response the antiphony rang out, He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and few noted that it was but empty sound and fewer still foreboded that those mighty chants were soon to cease and that the great temple itself ere a generation had passed would be thrown down, and that no long time thereafter the ground on which it had stood would be furrowed by the plowshare.

The scepter of Rome was not broken. The rule of Pilate was not disturbed. All was as though nothing of importance had happened. The incident was ended and everything would soon settle down into the old routine. In spite of the impotent efforts of a few foolish disciples who still revered his memory, the crucified blasphemer would soon be forgotten. So fancied Scribe and Pharisee, Roman governor

and Jewish High Priest. O shortsightedness of men! So sceptics and worldlings mistook then, so sceptics and worldlings mistake now. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," but nevertheless it comes with resistless power. Jesus triumphed in defeat. He lives by his death.

That death did all that the poets have declared. It abolished the sacrifices of Judaism. It overthrew the philosophies of Greece. It conquered the armies of Rome. It dethroned and banished the gods of Olympus. Not by any magic but by the omnipotence of faith, love and truth. The death of Jesus confirmed and sealed the sincerity of his life and teachings. One who will not sacrifice wealth or popularity to his view of truth and right has an opinion but not a conviction, one who will not sacrifice life itself rather than apostatize has an inclination but not love, a conjecture but not faith. Beautiful as are the beatitudes and parables, wonderful as was the eloquence, and winning and strong as was the personality of Jesus, if to save his life he had abjured his teachings or consented to remain silent about them, instead of becoming the founder of a religion obviously destined, in its ethical essence, to become world-wide, he would have

had a place only among the poets and prophets, the men who hope and dream and long, and not among the more commanding geniuses who act and cause. We are saved by his death. It was a holy and wise spirit that guided the church to preach "Christ crucified" as "the power of God unto salvation."

As a straw shows which way the wind blows, so an external change brought about by the death of Christ will show something of the nature and force of the inward revolution caused by it. Crucifixion had for generations been looked upon as the most ignominious of deaths. It was reserved for the vilest criminals and slaves. Roman law protected even the humblest Roman citizen against it. Jewish law accounted the man that was hanged or crucified as accursed of God. The cross was once a symbol as repulsive in all its associations as the gallows now is. But Jesus has ennobled it, so that now it is the endeared emblem of every thing most sacred, humane and beautiful. It crowns the spires of the cathedrals and churches that are the miracles of medieval and modern architecture. It is woven in silk, it is stamped on iron, it is carved in stone, it is set in costly gems. It is broadened or tapered, it is rounded or pointed

into every conceivable modification of its original form. It blazes in diamonds upon the breast of beauty, it streams upon the banners of illustrious nations; above all in the red color with which the cross of Christ was stained by his precious blood, it is the sign of a loving kindness in war that makes no distinction of friend and enemy but seeks only to lessen human suffering; and in the nature of the case the red cross and the spirit which it represents will eventually put an end to war altogether, for no nation, no man, no brute even, can long resist the force of genuine kindness. Science, logic and wit have effectually and forever discredited a great mass of Jewish and Christian legends and fancies, but there is no weapon of science, of argument, or of ridicule that has any power against justice and mercy. Theologies, symbols and ceremonies, products of temporary needs and imperfect knowledge, come in and go out, but faith, hope and charity abide forever, and will at last win the loyalty of every human heart.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DESCENT INTO HELL

We live almost as much in our memories and our hopes as in our actual experiences. The fear of hell is a dread shadow upon the lives of many persons; the hope of heaven is a radiant glory, an abounding joy in the lives of many others. Yet we have no definite knowledge in regard to the future life. There are, however, some suggestive texts in the Bible, there are phrases, pictures, and parables, that have most powerfully affected the imagination of men, and on a slender basis of figurative language awful doctrines of eternal punishment in a hell of fire have been constructed. In what is called the Apostles' Creed, it is said of Jesus, "He descended into Hell," and in the Middle Ages when every event in the life of our Lord was embellished to the utmost alike by the theologians, the poets, and the painters, a favorite theme for sermon, poem, and picture was Christ's descent into the pit and his triumph over Satan even in the very seat and center of the Evil One's power. All words

are defined by their connection, and in all probability the meaning of the word "hell" in the phrase in the creed is the grave; but Christian love and enthusiasm were not satisfied with this tame rendering. It seems unfitting that the great Conqueror of Death and Satan should lie helpless in the grave for three days, and instead of so doing legend represents him as using these three days to proclaim the gospel to all souls who had died before his coming to earth in the flesh. In aid of this interpretation we are referred to a passage in the first epistle of Peter, which says that Jesus by the spirit preached to the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient (1 Pet. 3: 18, 19, 20). The connection shows pretty clearly that the meaning is that Noah himself preached to his contemporaries in much the same way as Jesus had warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but mysticism dislikes simple explanations. In Ephesians it is said that Jesus, "when he ascended up on high, led captivity captive" (Eph. 4: 8). And so from these and other vague expressions it is inferred that Jesus forced an entrance into the stronghold of Satan, and that he inflicted new and terrible punishments upon the arch-enemy and his rebellious followers. He then proclaimed

a general amnesty to all penitent men and women, and ascended into heaven attended by thousands and tens of thousands of those who accepted his mercy.

By those who press the doctrine of the divine sovereignty to an unwarrantable limit, God has been represented as freely electing some to everlasting happiness in heaven and irrevocably reprobating some to everlasting misery in hell. This doctrine of election received for English people its most formal and authoritative expression in the Westminster Confession, framed in 1646. A few years afterwards a New England clergyman, Michael Wigglesworth, wrote a long poem called "*The Day of Doom.*" The book, it may be remarked, was approved by the churches, children were required to commit it to memory, and it had a very wide circulation. It represents Christ as passing judgment upon several classes of persons. When "reprobate infants" are reached the poet says:

> "Then to the bar, all they drew near
> Who died in infancy,
> And never had, or good or bad,
> Effected personally."

In vain they plead that they were not responsible for Adam's sin. They are told that Adam

was their representative, and that if he had stood they would gladly have profited by his virtue, and that therefore, as he fell, they are justly punished for his sin. They are then consigned to hell with the words:

> "You sinners are; and such a share
> As sinners may expect,
> Such you shall have, for I do save
> None but mine own elect."

Surely this is blasphemy against God, against the compassionate Son of Man, against humanity and against every principle of justice and mercy. Such vengeance upon the worst of sinners would be worse than inhuman, worse than devilish. Strange that good men should ever have thought that they were doing God service in ascribing such an atrocious character to him, and strange indeed that Jesus, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," and who taught men to love their enemies and to forgive the trespasses of a brother seventy times seven, should by any possible process have been transformed into a Ruler so stern and pitiless.

When King Lear was turned from the inhospitable door by two unnatural daughters and exposed to the fury of the storm, the filial

Cordelia, fondling her rescued father, protested against the outrage done to the aged man in the words:

> "Had you not been their father, these white flakes
> Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
> To be opposed against the warring winds?
> To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
> . . . Mine enemy's dog
> Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
> Against my fire."

The absolute sovereignty of God is a rational and, I think, a true conception. To create is a greater work than to control, and it is in the highest degree absurd to imagine that the universe or any being in it can in any way resist or evade the power of its omniscient and omnipotent Creator. Who can "run upon the thick bosses of his buckler"? The sovereignty of God is absolute. But the justice and mercy of God are absolute also. It is impossible by his very nature for God to sin. When God arbitrarily appoints one man to honor and one to dishonor, he simply gives one more and the other less of his bounty for the time being, and no one can know that when the cycle of life is complete the good of each will not be the same. Even now, it is very hard for us to be sure whose lot in life is the most desirable.

Happiness is as often found in the cottage as in the palace. God's bounties are pretty evenly distributed through his world.

But if it be not so—if now and through all eternity, God gives some of his creatures greater power and greater gifts than he gives to other created beings, who shall say that he is unjust? Shall he not do what he will with his own? What each receives is a free and good gift for which the Giver should be thanked. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

The most detailed picture of hell in the gospels is in the story of Dives and Lazarus, but that account is not original with Jesus. He simply used a familiar Talmudic story in support of his favorite doctrine that men are brothers and responsible for each other's welfare and especially that the rich have a duty toward the poor. In the presence of cruelty, hypocrisy, or heartless indifference, Jesus was always vehement.

Lust, gluttony, avarice, anger, and envy create hells in both body and mind. There is a hell of corrupted blood, of palsied limbs, of trembling nerves, a hell of pain and weariness and self-contempt, a hell of remorse and madness unto which sin brings its victims. Against

this the pulpit should warn men with earnest, tender, painstaking, and persistent solicitude. Let the chart of life be true. Warn men against real dangers and hoist no false signals against metaphorical and imaginary perils.

There is a hell, the hell of an evil conscience, but Jesus, though he has delivered many from it, never descended into it. His body descended into the tomb and returned to the dust from which it was created, and his immortal spirit entered into his everlasting life and has uplifted, and will continue to uplift, countless others to sit with him in eternal joy and glory at the right hand of God.

CHAPTER XXV

THE RESURRECTION

THE belief in life after death is primitive and universal. It is asserted by consciousness and is corroborated by many phenomena. The savage Indian had his happy hunting grounds, and the polished Greek his Elysium, the Jew, with his Asiatic love of pomp, had his celestial city with gates of pearl and streets of gold. All these are pictures of the imagination as it plays around the deep and ineradicable intuition that man is a spirit and that his spirit survives the destruction of his body.

Modern science teaches us that matter, however its form may be changed, is indestructible, and that heat may be converted into motion or into light, but that amid all its transformations its energy remains constant. The laws of the conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter have been more carefully formulated and more absolutely demonstrated in recent years, but the essential facts have been known and poetically expressed by all nations from the earliest times. The succes-

sive changes of water to cloud, cloud to snow, and snow back to water, the growth, decay, and renewed growth of vegetation, teach man by analogy that all death is only external and apparent The spring, when the apparently-dead earth wakes to new life, when the apparently-dead root and trunk and branch send forth new shoots and buds and blossoms, is the great teacher of the doctrine of a resurrection. But, it may be urged, the longest-lived tree at last dies and returns its elements to the soil, and therefore nature teaches no individual resurrection but only the continuance of the whole and an endless succession of new combinations. Why should God develop in man an individuality made of memory, faith, hope and love, and then destroy it? Man is made in God's image, and man does not wantonly destroy his most costly and wonderful creations. It is inconceivable that God should develop through youth, manhood and age the brain and heart of a Moses or a Paul, and then blot them utterly out of existence!

The facts and analogies hitherto spoken of appeal strongly to almost every one, but there is another class of less common facts which have also been influential in forming the belief of men in the resurrection. Seeing is believ-

ing, and undoubtedly many persons have *seen* the spirits of departed relatives and friends. Ballads and folk-lore are full of these ghost stories. The wife sees the dead husband; the husband, the dead wife; the parent, the child; and the child, the parent. The perjured lover is haunted by the ghost of the injured maid, and the grave yawns to give back the body of the murdered man to the terrified gaze of his assassin.

The fact is that whenever the imagination and emotions are very strongly excited, they supersede or overpower the senses. When a bright light is suddenly extinguished its appearance lingers for a moment on the retina, and when a figure that has strongly impressed the mind is withdrawn it still seems present. The gospel account of the resurrection is not an isolated or fictitious tale, however its details may have been distorted or embellished, but agrees with all the analogies of nature as recorded in the literature of every nation and every age.

The resurrection of Jesus is a great subjective fact. It would have been a miracle of miracles if so strong and wonderful a personality had vanished at once from the minds of men. Pilate's wife had in all probability seen him

but once, yet a single glance at that pure and majestic face haunted her dreams and made her warn her husband not to do him wrong. If Jesus appeared in vision to Pilate's wife, to whom he had never done a deed, or even spoken a word, of kindness, how should he not appear to Mary Magdalen, whom he had restored to womanhood and to whom he had spoken words of grace and sympathy such as no woman ever forgets? If the sorrowing face of Jesus haunted the dreams of Pilate's wife, an utter stranger, on whom Jesus had not cast a glance of even passing interest, how should not the image of that face haunt Peter, on whom the Lord had turned a reproachful look that made him weep bitterly? Many a time that paroxysm of grief was renewed, and many a time the face of Jesus stood out with a physical distinctness as events recalled to Peter the hour of his apostasy. The whole scene was ineffaceably burned into his memory. If Jesus appeared in mental vision to a woman who had seen him but once, would he not appear to disciples who had accompanied him for months and years, and to whom he had spoken such words as no other man ever spoke, and in whom he had raised hopes more sublime and wonderful than ever before filled the heart of man?

The belief in the resurrection of Jesus inevitably follows his life. If there had been no story of the resurrection, the whole gospel narrative would seem incredible, disproportioned and incomplete, like a building without its roof and capstone.

That the resurrection was in the hearts and not in the eyes of his disciples does not make it less real or important but more so. The spirit is more real than the body, and a resurrection of Jesus in the souls of his disciples gives a far stronger attestation to his character than any merely physical resurrection could have done. That it was subjective and not objective is proved by the general fact that spirit is invisible and that all other stories of the appearance of the spirits of the dead have been psychologically explained. The particulars given in the gospels sufficiently show that the resurrection was mental and not physical. The appearance of angels, like that of ghosts, always corresponds to the preconceptions of the observer, and an apparition of an angel "with a countenance like lightning and raiment white as snow" is obviously a vision of the mind and not of the eye. The two disciples who thought that Jesus had talked with them on the way to Emmaus did not know him for a

long time, which was impossible if the figure had really been that of Jesus in flesh and blood. Perhaps they talked with a stranger, and as they and he dwelt upon the life of Jesus their hearts burned within them, and when they sat down to their disconsolate evening meal they involuntarily contrasted it with the supper three days before, when the Master was alive and the twelve disciples, now a broken band, were apparently united in loyalty and love. Three short days only had passed, and of that band whose feet Jesus had washed, and to whom in affectionate and solemn words he had committed the perpetuation of his work, one had proved a traitor and was perhaps already known as a suicide, another was a conscience-stricken penitent, because although forewarned, he had denied with blasphemies the Lord he had promised to follow to the death, and all the rest were suffering pangs of remorse only less keen, because they too, had all forsaken him and fled. As they heard again the familiar formula which a pious Jew uttered before beginning his evening meal, the vision of Jesus passed before them, but as their eyes opened it vanished, like a weary soldier's dream of home and peace.

The account of the appearance of Jesus to

two disciples on the way to Emmaus at evening on the third day after his crucifixion is found in the gospel of Luke, but the gospel of John narrates that on the same third day, at the same evening hour, Jesus appeared to the disciples, except Thomas, at Jerusalem. That this vision also was mental is evident from the fact that a body could not be present in two places at the same time, and could not, as the account declares, pass through a closed door. A week later the disciples were again assembled and Thomas with them. Again it is expressly said that "the doors being shut, Jesus came and stood in the midst," and convinced even the unimaginative and despondent Thomas that he had risen. Thomas declared that unless he should put his fingers into the print of the nails and thrust his hands into the wounded side of Jesus he would not believe, yet Thomas never made the attempt, but was caught away in the enthusiasm of the others, saw with their eyes, heard with their ears, and believed with their belief. How could he have put his fingers into the print of nails in the hands of an immaterial body that had just passed through a closed door?

The gospel of Matthew says nothing about the appearance to the two disciples at Em-

maus, or to Peter, or to Thomas, but says that "the eleven disciples went into Galilee to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but," the report significantly adds, "some doubted." The plain appearance of a man in the body convinces the credulous and incredulous alike, and the doubt of some of the eleven disciples can only be explained as the struggle we all have, to maintain faith in the immortality of the spirit in hours of bereavement and sorrow.

Though in visions of the risen Jesus the senses were superseded, or, if one chooses to call it so, deceived, the heart was not deceived. Faith and hope are more real and trustworthy than flesh and blood or earth and sea. The body and the earth shall perish, they are but the vesture of the spirit, and shall wax old and be changed, but the spirit of man, like the spirit of God, is eternal. The disciples saw Jesus rise from the dead in spirit and in truth, and the church sees, and will forever see, that his spirit lives and reigns, and that death had no power over him.

It is perhaps a sufficient comment upon the last two chapters of John to say that, like the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, they seem

to illustrate the late and legendary character of many of the incidents recorded in the fourth gospel. If the story of the resurrection of Lazarus were true, it is difficult to conceive how it should have been omitted from the earlier-written gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and be found only in John. In the same way, if the miraculous draught of fishes and the conversation with Peter reported in the twenty-first chapter of John, took place, as is there asserted, in the presence of seven disciples, it is incredible that Matthew, Mark and Luke should never have heard of it, or, having heard of it, should have omitted it, especially as the accounts of the resurrection in Matthew and Mark are so brief.

There is one other late report, that in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Paul there enumerates the appearances of Jesus, and includes with them, as of the same class, the vision of Jesus which he himself had seen while on the way to Damascus, when "a light from heaven shined round about him," and a voice from heaven said unto him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." All violence provokes reaction. Paul had been making "havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling

men and women and committing them to prison." Paul was naturally an intelligent and humane man, but he was also a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and it was zeal for the religion of his fathers which led him to attempt to suppress a band of fanatics who seemed to him to be assailing everything sacred and precious to Israel. He had for them a vehement abhorrence like that of modern society against the anarchists and nihilists. But a humane and intelligent man cannot long be engaged in imprisoning and putting to death even the most vicious without much pain to himself and without being stirred to wonder whether there is not some great wrong or error against which these people in their blind and blundering way are contending.

Doubtless many of the early Christians were drawn from the vicious classes, the "publicans and sinners"; and the Pharisaic Paul may have been confirmed in his suspicions and dislikes by the conduct and appearance of some of his victims, but he must often have seen with surprise that the persons whom he was dragging to prison or death seemed to be more than ordinarily intelligent and virtuous people, and, above all, so acute and thoughtful a mind as Paul's must have wondered what was the secret

of the peace and joy these people possessed, to which his own proud and passionate heart was a stranger. He was present at the execution of Stephen, and he never forgot the words and the look of that heroic young martyr. Ever afterward, in the forefront of his remorse for sin, was his participation in the "blood of thy martyr Stephen." He was convicted as he looked at Stephen and heard him speak, but pride held him fast. Could he, a scholar and an officer, a man specially trained for, and long identified with, the profession of the canon law, acknowledge that his learning was worthless and his whole course of life mistaken? It is a hard thing to do, and few men in Paul's position ever do it. Paul did not at first. He stifled his convictions and redoubled the energy of his persecutions, but the sight of every other patient and cheerful Christian sufferer recalled the face of the young saint who as he was being examined said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," and whose last prayer before he "fell asleep" was, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

As Paul in the enforced leisure of the long journey to Damascus brooded over the testimony of Christian after Christian, their frag-

mentary words and acts grew into unity and coherence, the multiplied instances of faith piled up into a mountain of evidence, and Paul felt himself at last obliged to confess that he was fighting against a conviction clearer and stronger than his own. His belief was school-taught and complex, theirs was a fresh revelation from God, accepted by simple faith. His cold and intellectual belief left the heart still weary and unsatisfied, their faith had given them the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." Paul's agony increased from day to day till the ever-rising tide of his emotions at last swept away the barriers of education and led him to accept the new facts. He heard the voice of Jesus saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He saw Jesus, as Stephen had seen him, standing at God's right hand. With God all things are possible. God *may* have actually stationed himself in human form, and with Jesus at his side within the range of the vision first of Stephen and subsequently of Paul; but surely to the devout and studious mind it seems more consistent with the divine majesty and the usual methods of communicating truth to men to say that the visions of Stephen and Paul were purely mental.

In the case of Paul this is further confirmed by the fact that on another occasion he "was caught up into the third heaven and heard words which it was not lawful for him to repeat," but could not tell whether he was in the body or not. In every great crisis of his life, at Troas before going into Macedonia, on shipboard, and in the prisoner's dock, Paul had a vision; and as Paul says of Jesus after his crucifixion, "last of all he was seen of me also," it seems reasonable to believe that in his opinion all other manifestations of Jesus after death were of the same visionary kind as his own.

Moreover, in Paul's view the various visions of Jesus after death were not the main support of the doctrine of the resurrection. His conclusion is, "If the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen." The general law supports the particular case, and the particular case in its turn strengthens the general law. We believe in the life of the spirit after death, not on the slight and insufficient testimony of the senses, but on the strongest grounds of reason and the deepest and truest intuitions of consciousness. Visions are effects and not causes of faith, as certainly as shadow is the effect and not the cause of substance.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ASCENSION

ACCOUNTS of the ascension are found in Mark, Luke and the Acts. That in Mark says simply, "He was received up into heaven." Luke more dramatically says, "He led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." The account in the Acts is much longer, and illustrates very well the natural tendency to embellish a bald narration with suitable details. He is now received by a cloud, and his disciples are told that he will come again in like manner. These accounts grow out of the necessities of the case. When it had become the faith of the church that Jesus had appeared in the body to his disciples after death there were only two courses open, either to say that he was still upon the earth in the flesh, or that he had left it at a certain time and in a certain way. As he soon ceased to appear to the disciples, and had

never been seen by the multitude, the natural inference was drawn that he was no longer upon earth. The question then arose as to the length of his stay, and the period was naturally fixed at the traditional forty days. Moses was forty days in the mount, Elijah forty days in the wilderness, Jesus himself was tempted forty days in the desert, and legend runs in the groove of precedent.

Popular opinion having settled it that Jesus stayed upon earth after death only forty days, the imagination craved some picture of the manner of his departure. There was the vague precedent of Enoch. There was the mysterious burial of Moses, there was the fiery chariot of Elijah. But none of these quite satisfied the conceptions of the church. Affection and reverence longed for something more than a mere vanishing, and to be carried away by storm and lightning like Elijah, consonant as such an ending was with the career of the fiery prophet of the desert, was quite inconsistent with the life and character of Jesus. He was not a "son of Thunder," but one whose doctrine "distilled as the dew and as the rain upon the mown grass." A summer cloud, emblem of purity, beauty, and blessing, was the appropriate chariot for the Prince of

Peace who came with gentle ministrations to the poor and meek.

The conception that God dwells in the sky is derived from the fact that the sun is the source of light and heat, and gives life and beauty to the earth. As the sun is always hidden or attended by clouds, so God is represented as dwelling in the clouds or as descending to earth in them. "He hath established his throne in the heavens." "Clouds and darkness are round about him." In connection with the giving of the commandments to Moses it is said, "The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him." At the transfiguration it is said that "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." In like manner the writer of the book of Revelation says, "I saw a mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud." Greek and Roman mythologies have many similar instances. Heroes are thus invested with grace or conveyed from danger.

In the course of time the glory of the Son was reflected on the mother, and in consequence the death of Mary was idealized in the same manner as his. During the reign of Constantine the Great, under whom, in 313,

Christianity became the official religion, the feast of the Assumption of Mary was celebrated with great pomp in the East, and in the next century the festival was adopted by the western church. In 451 Marcian, the relic-gathering emperor, asked Bishop Juvenalis whether the body of Mary was still in the grave at Jerusalem and was told in reply that in Palestine the universal tradition was that the body as well as the soul of the Blessed Mother of God had been translated by angels into heaven. Special prayers were composed in honor of the event, it was later formally incorporated into the creed of the church of Armenia, and it was supported in controversy by many ingenious arguments. As, according to Jewish legend, Elijah, the prophetic forerunner of Jesus, had been carried to heaven in the body, it was thought fitting to award similar honor to the legislative predecessor of Christ, and there is still extant an elaborate Latin work upon the Assumption of Moses.

In the account of the departure of Jesus from the earth, as in that of his birth, imagination has played a large part, but this does not derogate from, but adds to, his true glory, for imagination loves especially to employ itself about the noblest men and the greatest truths,

as the artists delight to work in ivory and marble and to encircle pearls and diamonds with gold.

When Mark, borrowing the language of the 110th Psalm, says that Jesus sits "at the right hand of God," the words are obviously a mere figure expressing power and exaltation, just as the language, "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust" expresses only the perfect security of the righteous. God is not a corporeal being with hands and feet like a man, but "God is a spirit." Interpreting the language in its natural signification that Jesus is to us next to the Father in power and glory, it is strictly true. We have ceased to believe in Ceres, the goddess of earth, in Neptune, the god of the seas, in Apollo, the god of the sun, and in Minerva, the goddess of the air. Fire, water, earth and air are now only physical forces under the control of one omnipotent God. Angels are represented as singing and harping around the throne, as mighty warriors victorious over all rebels against God's power, and as God's ministers in all his communications with man. They heal the sick, they strengthen the faint, they deliver the prisoner, they guard the saint. But the Christian imagination, even in the

earliest ages, exalted the Son far above all the hierarchy of heaven, above all the ranks of angels, archangels, princedoms, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubs, and seraphs, into which, in imitation of the gradations of earthly aristocracy, theologians have classified the attendants of the Lord Almighty. But as the conception of the unity and spirituality of God has grown, belief in mighty angelic agents of his will has declined. With every advance of scientific knowledge it becomes harder to believe the story of herald angels singing to listening shepherds, to believe that winged messengers from heaven communicate medicinal powers to pools of water, or open prison doors, or walk unseen at man's side to protect him from danger. Our imagination is turned into newer and nobler channels. Angels are disappearing from the earth as elves and fairies have disappeared, and instead of their graceful and capricious activities we have the immediate, ever-active, invariable and beneficent power of the Almighty. Even the most imaginative Protestant Christians rarely invoke or expect the assistance of angels. So far as earth is concerned, they belong to a decaying and almost extinct mythology.

Before the rising sun of knowledge the clouds

of fancy have melted away, and with wiser and deeper love for men, our visions of angels have ceased, yet the ascension of Jesus is more real to-day than ever before. At death he entered into his kingdom and into fullness of joy; he rose into a higher life and to a more perfect knowledge of God. Language is at bottom only a body of metaphors, and no metaphor better expresses the truth than the words of the creed: "He sitteth at the right hand of God in glory everlasting." He reigns in heaven over countless "spirits of just men made perfect." He reigns upon earth over a humanity that under the influence of his teaching and example is achieving its great destiny.

CHAPTER XXVII

JESUS AS A MAN

MEN'S views of Jesus, like their views of the phenomena of nature, have passed through various stages. To his contemporaries he was a remarkable man. To some of them he was a supremely good man, a prophet sent from God and aided by God in all his works; to others he was a mistaken enthusiast; to others still, a base deceiver and blasphemer, but to all contemporaries alike he was a man.

Scarcely had contemporaries passed from the scene before the creative, idealizing imagination of man began to transform the actual Jesus into a demi-god. He was represented as of supernatural birth, as possessing power over all the elements, all creatures, all diseases, and over death itself, as the divinely appointed teacher, ruler and judge of men. This, the gospel delineation, is essentially the work of poetic minds. It is a concrete and beautiful creation of character and work, such a transformation as the historic King Arthur has undergone at the hands of various myth-mak-

ers, until at last, in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* he is a thoroughly idealized man and ruler, and an allegorical conception of the war between Sense and Soul.

The evangelists did not do Jesus justice. They embellished his actual life with mythical incidents which they supposed suited to his character and even necessary to the establishment of his right to be the Messiah. They intended to exalt, but they actually degraded him. Stories of turning "water into wine," of the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes, of walking upon the sea, are tawdry and melodramatic marvels. They chill and alienate us, and greatly mar the simple beauty of the delineation of the soul of Jesus.

So every prodigy that Jesus is represented as performing pushes him a little farther away from us, and makes us less able to appreciate the realities of his suffering yet heroic human life.

We shall yet have in literature a revolution like that which has begun in painting in reference to Jesus. The halos, the floating clouds, the winged angels, the rosy cherubs, and the gaudy vestments of the Italian school are giving way to simpler and truer pictures of the waiting and sympathetic human Jesus.

But if the poets have toiled in vain to represent the real Jesus, how much more complete and disastrous has been the failure of the systematizing philosophers, the creed-makers and professed theologians. At their hands Jesus has fared worse than the man who "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who stripped him of his raiment, beat and wounded him, and left him half dead."

But the people have been wiser than the priests and theologians. Unable to untwist the iron links of the logician's chain they have simply laid it aside and ignored it. The heart is wiser than the head, and so the instinct of humanity has cleaved to the sorrowing, suffering Son of Man and has rejected the theological substitute of an easily offended Mediator and a relentless Judge. Strange indeed that what was intended for the highest adoration should have resulted in the deepest abasement. With every added title and external honor the intrinsic worth of Jesus has been lessened. Jesus the man is inexpressibly beautiful and attractive; Jesus the demi-god is still a fascinating creation of art; but the Jesus of Athanasius and Calvin and their followers, the angry and pitiless deity, is a revolting conception, essentially and basely pagan.

Let us reverently and earnestly study the supreme Son of Man, praising God that he has given such power unto men and finding new encouragement and hope for even the lowest human life because it is potentially one with the highest example of manhood. This was the original faith of the Christian church, but it was speedily crushed by pagan philosophies, and then lay in abeyance during the ages of ignorance, but has steadily grown since the Reformation, controls now the higher intellect and scholarship of the civilized nations, and will eventually supplant the received Christian mythology as completely as science and ethics have effaced the "bleating gods" of Egypt and the anthropomorphic deities of Mount Olympus.

The doctrine of the unity of God is among the most rational and firmly established of truths. It rests on an induction so strong and simple as to be like a primary truth. It is supported by the most powerful scientific analogies and harmonizes the phenomena of the moral universe in the same manner as gravitation and the indestructibility of matter harmonize the phenomena of the physical world. It was the faith of the greatest line of prophets and the most religious nation of antiquity, and in

ancient as in modern times of the wisest and most virtuous philosophers. It has always been the nominal creed of Christendom and is now both the nominal and actual creed of every educated man. It is of course believed by some in conjunction with the doctrine of the Trinity, but the acceptance of two incompatible opinions when it is not due to pure ignorance and thoughtlessness, is either pious faith in a mystery with which reason should not presume to deal, or indolent acquiescence in a tradition which it has been assumed it would injure religion and morality to disturb. As soon as the mass of Christians fairly face the question and make their choice between three gods and one God, there cannot be any doubt as to their decision. The Trinity was an immeasurable advance upon polytheism, but a still nobler conception is that of Paul, "Then shall the Son also himself be subject . . . that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 28).

Creation as a whole is a manifestation of the power and wisdom and goodness of God, and each part of it, every plant, bird and beast, and especially every man, is to some extent a manifestation of the greatness of the skill, of the unfathomable variety of the mind of the Creator. But it is the wildest of man's dreams

to identify any one man absolutely with the Creator of all. There is no only-begotten Son, for God is the Creator and Father of all men. To make Jesus God not only robs humanity of its greatest example of virtue and power, not only deprives Jesus himself of all merit as a sufferer and worker in our behalf, but it must offend the Almighty God. It is excusable in the ignorant, but surely intelligent people, while rising above the primitive fear of a jealous and revengeful God to Christ's conception of a patient and loving Father, will see that it cannot be pleasing to the Most High to have his glory given to another.

The essence of modern orthodoxy is that men are saved by a vicarious atonement, a baptism, and faith that Jesus was God incarnate. The teaching of John the Baptist and of Jesus is that righteousness is personal, that men are saved by truth and purity, by justice and mercy. The idea that men can be saved by a ceremony or a creed or by substituted righteousness is only a more refined idolatry and does not differ in principle from belief in the efficacy of the blood of bulls and goats.

The measure in which any one feels the nobility of the life of Jesus is the measure of

his own nobility of soul and of his own intelligence and virtue.

Very early in the history of the Christian church the prediction was put into his mouth, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." From the day of the crucifixion to the present time his power, contrary to all human probability and expectation, has continually increased. The work of Jesus seemed to be utterly lost. He died in ignominy and left no written record, no code of laws, no defined ceremonies, no property, no buildings, nothing but a few disciples and the memory of his life and words. He was denied, betrayed, crowned with thorns, scourged, and crucified. His last utterance on earth was a groan as in agony his great soul left its earthly tenement, yet not a throb of his heart or brain has been without effect. His life is the most successful life that was ever lived. Every great idea that he cherished has struck deep root in the hearts of men, and is continually conquering new fields of thought and new areas of population.

"The love of Christ constrains" men as nothing else does. For many years I have watched the windows of a dormitory for theological students, and have seen that in some

rooms lamps were burning till past midnight, and in others that they were lighted before the dawn. Through almost the entire night those stars of student industry shine. No other motive power known to me is so strong and steady a quickener of intellectual and spiritual life as "the love of Christ."

The life of Jesus was noble and complete. His ideals were lofty, and he maintained them against all obstacles and allurements, and, what is most important of all, he expressed them in imperishable words and acts. He finished the work that was given him to do. Seven great qualities seem to me especially prominent in the character of Jesus: faith, spirituality, benevolence, intellect, courage, energy, and, as the result of them all, power. He had the rare and wonderful quality of personal faith in God. He seemed to see God work and hear him speak. Most believers believe on the testimony of others; Jesus differs from them in that he believes primarily because of his own intuitions.

The great fundamental question of religion is the character of God. The practical conflict of opinion is between those who love and trust God and those who do not, between those who believe that God is positively and ener-

getically good, that he is exerting infinite power and infinite wisdom to benefit man, and those who disbelieve, or at least doubt, that God really cares much for man's welfare. Now Jesus is the Captain of our Salvation because he is the pre-eminent asserter of God's goodness. God, as Jesus portrays him, is "our Father in heaven." It was from Jesus that John learned that God is love. It was from Jesus that Paul learned that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

This faith in God is the basis of every other great quality in the character of Jesus. Believing in the goodness of God, it was easy to believe that "the pure in heart are blessed" and that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

Yet his faith was voluntary and meritorious, and not necessitated and absolute. "He was tempted in all points as we are." His faith was nourished as ours must be by obedience and prayer.

The test of common men is to be true to conviction even in small matters. If a man could know that his fidelity to principle would benefit many nations for thousands of years, he would be greatly strengthened to sacrifice his comfort and life and glory. But if he fears

that his sacrifice of comfort and even of life will influence very few people and for a very short time and be an insignificant and soon-forgotten event, his sacrifice rises immeasurably in the moral scale, for it is made to duty and not to the love of glory.

Jesus met this test, and for a long time did his duty in obscurity and uncertainty. But, as he taught the world, "If any man seeks to do God's will, he shall know what that will is," so the trust of Jesus grew continually stronger, yet, as we see by his agonies and temptations even to the close of his life, he still walked as a Son of Man by true faith, and not as God to whose vision the future is as clear as the past and present.

He may have dreamed and hoped about universal fame and power, but he had no assurance of it. His biographers have attributed beliefs and motives to him. He has been made to see the extent of his future power as Columbus has been represented as foreseeing all the glories of the western continent, but it is not true that Jesus was thus paid in advance. His greatness is infinitely higher. It is the greatness of faith, not in the seen but in the unseen. He was a true son of Abraham, who obeyed God not knowing whither he went; he

is the Captain of our Salvation because he, like us, is saved by faith and hope.

Not his genius but his love, his courage, and his fidelity are the most admirable and extraordinary elements in the character of Jesus. Who is so base and selfish that he does not even wish well to his fellow men? Every man dreams of doing good, but few have the faith and courage to accomplish or even to undertake any great work for the good of mankind.

It is because Jesus "endured to the end" that he is saved, because he drank the cup of obedience and suffering to the dregs, that he wears his matchless crown. If he had flinched at last, if he had "disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct," he would have been a mere "dreamer of the Ghetto," and his discouraged disciples would never have rallied, and there would never have been a Christian church. If, after all his beatitudes, his parables, his words of eloquence and his deeds of mercy, if at the last he had made peace with the Scribes and Pharisees and agreed to be "prudent and practical" and "make changes only as fast as the church was ready to accept them," if, in short, he had compromised with his convictions in the man-

ner of so many other reformers ancient and modern, he would now have only the same petty academic fame that belongs to other men whose lives have been less noble than their words. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

To faith, courage, benevolence, and intellect, Jesus added the homely but essential virtue of industry. He did not think of the world as made in six days and God as since then sitting in idle pomp. No, he saw that God's love and power are ever active. He saw God as the keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, as him in whom we live and move and have our being, as him who sustains all things by the exercise of his power, as him who opens his hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing. Jesus saw God not only as a Ruler and Judge, but as a Father whose greatness consists in laboring for the good of all his children. God was to him the Supreme Worker. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Work was his joy. He was straitened until his mission was accomplished.

The claims put forth by Jesus himself and by others in his behalf are so exalted that it is surprising to hear him say of himself, "I am meek and lowly," yet there is nothing in all

the gospel more touching than this confession and the appeal based upon it.

All the great claims of Jesus were representative and official. In his personal character he, like all truly great men, was humble. It was from a fountain of humility, joy and peace in his soul that he said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

He was not only humble but patient and "slow to anger." He did not resent mere personal insults. When rejected by the Samaritans, he went uncomplainingly to another village. Yet "beware the fury of a patient man." No one was ever so vehement in his scorn of hypocrisy and greed, because no one was so free from any complicity in them, and to no one else was their hideousness so apparent.

Jesus was the champion of the common people whom God loves and whom proud and cruel men have called the proletariat. He was the poet of hope, the teacher of morality, the martyr of truth and justice, the friend of man, the obedient Son of God.

I hold with the man who loves and admires Jesus Christ, whatever may be that man's

errors, rather than with the man who does not love and admire Jesus, whatever may be that man's truths. I consider that the lover of Jesus is, on the whole, the wiser and the better man of the two, even if he tells his beads on a rosary because he cannot read, and even if the other man be a polished scholar.

Greater than the tiller of the soil who feeds, or the artisan who clothes the body, greater than the thinker who informs the mind, is the prophet who purifies and elevates the soul. The chief danger to the supremacy of Jesus in this regard is from those exaggerated claims which provoke dissent and lead to an equally exaggerated rejection of them. To exalt one into a deity is to obliterate his characteristics as a man, and to cast doubt upon all his actual virtues and achievements. Countless good men have suffered by this process. Canonize a man and remove him from criticism, and while he is placed on a pedestal he is rendered motionless, lifeless, and uninteresting. The least interesting biographies are those in which adoration has most completely obliterated the natural features of character. The educated, even the ignorant, world can no longer read the legends of the saints, and in the same way the world is tiring of the orthodox sermon on the

miracles of Jesus, and is concentrating attention more and more upon his genius, aims and virtues.

He remains greatest of the good and best of the great. Some men and women may have been as innocent, gentle, patient, compassionate and loving, may have been like him in his lamblike aspect, but how immeasurably different they are from him when he becomes the lion of the tribe of Judah, how different in originality of intellect, in force of will, in power to do and to rule. What a paltry thing is mere innocence, merely doing no harm, beside positive and high achievement! How Jesus himself condemns a merely negative character, one whose talent is buried in the earth! Almost every strong, active, positive character in doing his work will make some mistakes. The wheels will creak, the dust will rise, the coach will jolt, if it is to move onward. The deep, fertilizing river will sometimes overflow its banks, but better the great volume of water, enriching vast areas and bearing commerce on its bosom, even though it now and then rises too high and devastates the surrounding country, than the tiny rivulet powerless alike for good or evil. The marvel of marvels is that a character of such tremen-

dous force and of such mighty genius as that of Jesus remained at all times and under every stress of temptation submissive to the moral law and obedient to the voice of conscience.

He conquered all the weaknesses of humanity. The love of money, of social rank, of ease, of "the bubble reputation," did not move him. He went about doing good. He gave himself for others. Trained though he was among forms and traditions, he taught men that religion was a thing of the spirit, and that sin was in the motive as well as in the act. He lifted himself above the prejudices of race and was the first to give the world a religion of humanity, one which was not only to be world-wide in its extent, but all-inclusive in its embrace, for it was to do good even to the unthankful and to the evil, and to remove hatred from the world by putting an end to retaliation. Compared with the establishment of a religion adapted to become, and apparently destined to be, universal, a religion of absolute purity and of boundless benevolence, how small is the achievement of any inventor or man of science, of any artist, dramatist, legislator or conqueror! The instinct of humanity is right in placing Jesus high above Archimedes and Newton, above Raphael, Beethoven,

and Shakespeare, high above Alfred and Washington. He must be compared only with Moses, Zoroaster, Socrates, Confucius, Buddha, and Mohammed, and though the suffrage of the world has not yet been given, though the world at large has not even attempted a full and impartial comparison of these founders and their systems, it seems probable that the comparison that will inevitably be made in the future, while it will raise the great prophets of other nations, who are now among us unduly depressed by our ignorance and prejudice, will also serve to bring out more clearly the superiority of Jesus as the pre-eminent Son of Man.

The character of Jesus is so colossal that it is unintelligible to us, accustomed as we are to a different type of humanity. We understand great inventors, great statesmen, great manufacturers and merchants, but in this age and country we rarely see and little understand the prophet and the poet. There is a reserve power in nature beyond our comprehension. Travelers in the tropics are astonished to find that many plants and animals attain there twenty times the size that they have in the temperate zone. Our delicate hot-house plants are there hardy and luxuriant trees. Our weak and timid domestic animals are

proud and beautiful lords of forest and plain. Geraniums are trees, and cats are tigers.

Something analogous to this is seen in the difference between the modern man, cramped and pressed down by a life of routine, by a mass of unassimilated knowledge, by multiplied legal restraints and by exacting toil, and the greater men who lived in earlier times and simpler conditions.

This stern discipline is doubtless improving the race in important respects, and on the whole working out good results, yet in one great field at least we seem to have lost the grandeur that human character once exhibited. As compared with those of the ancient prophets, the imaginations of our modern religious teachers are dull, their emotions cold, their wills feeble, their courage small. They and we stand abased and amazed at the character of Jesus, as the northern barbarians accustomed to log huts were abased and amazed when they saw the Coliseum and the palaces of the Cæsars. The character of Jesus would be better understood among us if we were better acquainted with the saints and martyrs and prophets, if we familiarized ourselves with the lives of Mohammed, of Joan of Arc, of Saint Theresa, of Saint Francis, of

George Fox, of Emanuel Swedenborg and others, who have had heavenly visions and in the strength of these have accomplished marvelous works.

Jesus transcends the limits of nationality as no other man has done. He is not, like Alfred or Washington, the ideal of a single people or type. His mind was broader, his nature more sympathetic than theirs. Jesus is the ideal man, the hero of humanity. He was so pure, so benevolent, so wise and so courageous, that his character fascinates and dominates all who fix their attention closely upon it. It is no wonder that in the effort to express their love and admiration men have employed all the resources of language and called him by every endearing and by every honorable name.

He died in the prime of the strength of body and mind. He was spared "the indignities of decline and the cold gradations of decay." More beautiful than Apollo is this daring young prophet. Trusting his intuitions and braving reproach and persecution, he threw himself against formalism, hypocrisy, greed, and cruelty, and taught men to love and help one another. He is not only the culmination of Jewish heroism, but the most romantic and

noble figure in the history of humanity,—the man of sorrows, the friend of sinners. He died that we might live. He sacrificed himself to deliver men from a yoke and open to them a larger life.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

THE Trinity never commended itself to any one's reasoning as an abstract proposition. When accepted it has always been as a compromise, an escape from the difficulties and the contradictions in the Bible. Divest the doctrine of its biblical support, and every mind would reject it.

There are some persons to whom no confirmation is so strong as a "text of holy writ." As a means of helping such people to the truth, let us examine what the Scriptures say in regard to the unity of God. In the first place it must be remarked that the word god is often used in a derivative sense, as for instance in the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20: 3). It is sometimes thought that this text shows that the Jews at this time believed in polytheism and regarded Jehovah as their national god only, and not as the God of the whole earth. By others it is regarded only as a warning against idols, which are mere creations of superstition,

"nothing in the world." The Psalmist makes a glorious distinction between the omnipotent Jehovah and the false gods of the heathen. "All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens." The books of the Old Testament are one continued protest against idolatry and polytheism. Jesus himself in summing up the Law and the Prophets quotes from Deut. 4: 5, 6, and says the first and greatest commandment is, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12: 29, 30). All the other utterances of Jesus are consistent with this. He always represented himself as one appointed and sent to do the will of the Father in heaven and possessing only a delegated power. "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me" (John 5: 3). He has no power to protect himself in danger, but says to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 27: 53). When he sits upon his throne in his highest

exaltation, it is an honor received from the Father, and he tells his disciples: "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20: 23). He does not even know the future. Of the time of the coming judgment he says: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13: 32). The writer of the book of Job says of God: "He put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly; . . . yea the stars are not pure in his sight" (Job. 15: 15 and 25: 5). With the same sense of the infinite disparity between the original and perfect holiness of the Creator and the reflected and imperfect goodness of the creature, Jesus refused to be called "good," saying to one who addressed him as Good Master: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God" (Matt. 19: 17).

The apostles understood and preached the subordination of Jesus. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, declared: "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3: 22, 23). Again he says: "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; . . . and the head of Christ is God"

(1 Cor. 11:3). Looking forward to the final triumph of Christ, Paul says: "When all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

Peter's testimony agrees with Paul's. Preaching at Pentecost Peter says: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts 2:22). When questioned by the council as to his preaching, Peter declared: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew" (Acts 5:30). On another occasion Peter declared in a sermon: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Here is abundant testimony from Jesus himself and from the evangelists and apostles as to the primitive faith of the church. Language could not be more clear and emphatic, and if all references in the New Testament had been similar no dogma of the Trinity could have

arisen. It is not to be denied, however, that there are very many passages, which ascribe to Jesus unique and superhuman powers and dignities, and from these in course of time a system of doctrine was developed which represents Jesus as the firstborn of every creature, created before all angels and all worlds, and therefore, in a sense, the only-begotten Son of God. This theology, known as Arianism, after a time gave way to the full Trinitarianism of Athanasius. By selecting the poetic and mystical titles of Jesus from the gospel of John and from Paul's epistles, and ignoring the declarations of Jesus himself and the explicit language of the synoptic gospels and the Acts, the Arians can fully establish their view.

But no one has any right to ignore those early and definite declarations, or to attach equal importance to the later and less intelligible statements. Arianism satisfies neither those who believe in the unity of God nor those who consider that there is a divine Trinity. It is a compromise. Though it is a much more plausible and more scriptural doctrine than Trinitarianism, it does not appeal strongly either to cool reason or to fervid devotion. Imagination and reason alike push on to full development.

Tract No. 2, published by the American Unitarian Association, asserts: "Of 1300 passages in the New Testament wherein the word God is mentioned, not one necessarily implies the existence of more than one person in the Godhead, or that this one is any other than the Father."

"There are 320 passages in which the Father is absolutely and by way of eminence called God; while there is not one in which the Son is so styled." "The terms which are necessary to the very statement of the doctrine [of the Trinity] are not found in Scripture. The words Trinity—triune—God-man are not in the Scriptures. We nowhere find the expression God the Son, but always the Son of God; nowhere God the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit of God. The expressions, first person, second person, third person, three persons, are not found."

In its literary aspect the Revised Version of the English Bible is a great disappointment. It seems to me a mistake to substitute for the alliterative and euphonious "clear as crystal," the unmusical and not essentially more accurate expression "bright as crystal," and to alter "Eliezer of Damascus" into the unintelligible "Dammesek Eliezer," and it is literalism run

mad to change the expression "the earth is his footstool" from its sublime simplicity and strength into the clumsy tautology "the earth is the footstool of his feet."

But whatever may be the faults of style in their version, the last revisers set a noble example of fidelity to the facts in their dealing with the corruptions of the text. On the authority of the earliest manuscripts they have altered or omitted some of the most famous of the Trinitarian proof texts. They have omitted altogether, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." They append to the sixteenth chapter of the gospel of Mark the significant note: "The two oldest Greek manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse 9 to the end of the chapter." In 1 Tim. 3: 16, they change "God was manifest in the flesh" into "He who was manifested in the flesh," and they change Luke 2: 33 from "Joseph and his mother" to "his father and his mother."

The earlier the manuscript the less Trinitarian it is. Yet the oldest extant manuscripts of the New Testament are none of them earlier than the fourth century, and, as they vary very much from each other, it is a moral certainty

that the text of no one of them is throughout identical with the original gospels and epistles. Growth and decay are universal laws, and, though we talk lightly of three centuries, it is a long period, and affords time for great modifications in ancient popular writings, multiplied not as now in great stereotyped editions, but one by one, and thus subject to all the errors and caprices of each transcriber.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURIES

THE personality of Jesus is so striking that in regard to it the minds of men have vacillated between irrational unbelief and irrational credulity. There were once many, and there are still a few, persons who think that there never was such a man, and that the whole story about him is a pure fiction, as much so as that of Prometheus or Hercules, and that like other wonderful creations its only original is the love of the marvelous and the longing for the ideal, inherent in human nature.

At the other extreme are those who regard every detail in each of the four biblical biographies as absolutely true, who think that each writer was supernaturally preserved from error and that no subsequent copyist has altered, or commentator amplified, the story in the least.

Between these extremists there is a growing body of investigators who believe first that the historic Jesus was a man of most remarkable character, and secondly that his wonderful personality, having won the love and admiration of

men, has been idealized with all the artistic skill that affection delights to lavish upon the object of its regard. Men admire the strength and courage of the warrior and they exaggerate his feats, but no Samson ever actually killed a thousand men with his own hand in one battle. Men admire woman's beauty and idealize it in song, but no Annie Laurie ever had a brow whiter than the snowdrift, and no Juliet eyes that could shine in the sky in the place of stars. We have everywhere to reckon with the poetry and hyperbole of affection.

Jesus was considered to be God by the majority of Christians from very early times, but the majority have also believed a thousand other now discarded superstitions. Truth is not to be decided by majorities; and if it were, would not that method of determination be fatal to every Protestant church, nay, to Christianity itself, for it is certain Buddhists, Confucianists, Mohammedans and pagans of various sorts still far outnumber Christians.

So far as I have been able to learn, the strict doctrine of the unity of God was universally held in the Christian church throughout the first century.

The New Testament, at least, which speaks of so many controversies on other subjects, has

not a word to say about any division of opinion upon this one. In the New Testament there is no mention of any God the Son or God the Holy Spirit, but only of the Son of God and the Spirit of God. In the first century there were those who held that Jesus was only a prophet like Moses or Elijah, and there were those who believed that he was an inferior deity sent down from heaven; but no one at that time, so far as the records show, believed that he was equal with the Father. The gospel of John was in all probability not then in existence, but even the gospel of John makes Jesus say expressly, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14: 28). "I am come in my Father's name" (John 5: 43). "The works which the Father hath given me to finish . . . bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me" (John 5: 36).

Deification is barbaric ignorance, transcendent wonder at an uncomprehended genius. There is nothing singular in the deification of Jesus. He is the evening star of the old twilight in which thousands of heroes and rulers were thus honored, and the morning star of the new dawn in which all men are sons of God.

It was not Jews but Greeks who fashioned the doctrine of the Trinity. Some few Jews

may indeed have apostatized from the sublime monotheism of their ancient faith, but it is to the eternal honor of the Jewish people as a whole that through the long twilight, deepening at last into blackest midnight of idolatry and superstition, they have patiently waited for that dawning, the early streaks of which are now everywhere visible.

The testimony of the Jews, the countrymen of Jesus, the nation most familiar with great prophets and best able to understand their language and aims, is of itself sufficient to prove that Jesus was a man. And it is reasonable to believe that if Gentiles had not distorted Christianity, the Jews would soon have included Jesus among the roll of their authoritative prophets, as after a time they included so many others whose teachings they at first rejected and scorned.

The world owes the Jew an immense debt of gratitude for his continual protest against the false and heathen doctrines that have been associated with the person and teaching of Jesus. In rejecting Jesus as a prophet altogether the Jews made a great mistake, but a large share of the blame of that error must be charged to those who made Jesus the center of an absurd and idolatrous system. The Jews,

taught by the prophets and the psalmists, did well to reject the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, the efficacy of sacraments, the apostolic succession, and salvation by imputed righteousness. Those ideas are corruptions of the teachings of Jesus, and to reject them is one mode of accepting Jesus himself. The medieval Jew was perhaps as true a Christian as the medieval churchman.

The earliest testimony of the Christian church, the consistent testimony of the Jewish nation, and the present judgment of intelligent Asiatics are all against the irrational doctrine of the Trinity. How, then, did such a conception ever fasten itself upon the creed of Christendom? It was part of that paganization of the early church by which the apostles were substituted for the greater, and the saints of the church for the smaller, heathen deities, and by which angels took the place of nymphs, fauns and dryads.

The earlier admixture took place in the East, but in the East and West alike the church was soon saturated with pagan ideas. Jesus was more and more closely identified with God the Father, until at last the differences of opinion in the church became so marked that it was necessary to attempt to define belief on

the subject. A general council held at Antioch in 269 refused to declare the Son equal to the Father, and expressly condemned the expression *homo-ousios*, which means of the same substance. The controversy, however, continued, and the great council of Nicæa in 325 singularly enough adopted as the test of orthodoxy the very word, *homo-ousios*, which had been condemned by the earlier assembly. The pendulum now swung to the other side. As Jesus had been authoritatively declared by a great council representing the whole church to be of the same substance with the Father, many enthusiasts began to teach that he was in all respects one with the Father, or, in other words, that it was God himself who had come down to earth; and, as reverence for God forbade the supposition that he could need food and drink, could grow weary and suffer, these Docetae, Apparitionists as we may call them, asserted that the body of Jesus was a mere phantom, and all his apparent acts mere illusions. This doctrine was too extreme even for the credulous multitude, yet it lingered in an attenuated form for many centuries; but we shall not follow it further than to say that Eutyches was condemned in 451 at the council of Chalcedon for the so-called monophysite, or

"one nature," heresy. That assembly, wearied of the controversy which had now vexed the church for three hundred years, and seeing that it was impossible to make a clear statement that would harmonize all the diverging opinions, prudently took refuge in an ambiguous and mystical phraseology. It was affirmed that Jesus was truly God and truly man, and that his two natures were perfectly united and yet remained entirely distinct.

The question was soon set at rest for a time, not by the long, ingenious and meaningless statement of the council, summarized above, but by the stern logic of events. It was no time for Christendom to waste its strength upon barren and metaphysical disputes. The barbarians were at the frontiers of the Roman empire. The first great invasion of the Huns occurred in 451, the very year of this council, and only twenty-five years later Rome itself, the eternal city, was captured by the Goths, and the Christian church, dismayed and almost submerged by the torrent of barbarism, laying aside all speculative questions, set itself to work to civilize and educate its conquerors. The practical Roman genius refused to waste its strength on these Greek subtleties. It aimed at power, and it won it by practical

means, by moral teaching, by useful labors, by careful legislation, and by an impressive ceremonial. The rise to power of the Roman church, as told in Milman's *Latin Christianity*, is a most wonderful and fascinating story, but it must not detain us. Suffice it to say that the principle of authority grew and the exercise of private judgment declined. The Bishop of Rome claimed to be the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the apostles, and the king of all the kings of earth. Monarchs held the bridle or kissed the foot of the supreme Pontiff. The great power of the Popes had been won not by mere argument but by promoting peace among rulers, and above all by protecting the poor against the cruelty and extortion of the rich. Many abuses there doubtless were, but on the whole for many centuries the influence of the church was in the interest of learning, good government and religion. The rule of Rome made Europe a federation, and by maintaining a sense of union among the scholars of all countries by the common use of the Latin language, it preserved amid the confusion of countless harsh and unstable barbaric tongues a large part of the noble literature and philosophy of antiquity.

But the universal and absolute sway of the Popes, while it was favorable to the diffusion of the doctrines of the church and such other learning as the church approved, made it almost impossible to disseminate any opposing opinions.

Printing, that is to say, real printing by movable metal types, was not invented till the year 1450. Very few persons except the clergy possessed any manuscript books or could have read them if they had done so. Few of the clergy had a copy even of the Latin Bible, and it was not till 1382 that a complete translation of the Bible was made into English by Wycliffe, "the morning star" of the Reformation.

All through the Middle Ages the extent of the sway, the magnificence of the pomp, the majesty of the claims of Rome, overawed the imaginations of men. It seemed like blasphemy to doubt and madness to assail any of the fundamental doctrines of the Papacy. There were scholars equal to any that ever lived in industry and acuteness, but they were exclusively occupied in harmonizing, developing and systematizing the doctrines of the church. Aquinas and Duns Scotus and their fellows from a few texts spun immense cob-

webs of learning, exquisitely ingenious and fine, but, like all other metaphysics drawn from false premises, of no practical value whatever.

If a doubt as to the deity of Christ arose in the mind of some daring thinker, he was overawed as he thought of his presumption in dissenting from the universal creed of Christendom from the teaching of the church and the schools, and the implicit faith of the multitude. Those were the ages of faith, and to breast the current of opinion then was like trying to swim against Niagara.

The circumstances were such as to produce a contagion of credulity, and probably few persons ever seriously doubted the fundamental tenets of the church. If now and then a scholar of unusual independence of mind did so, he was likely for practical reasons to suppress his doubtings. By acquiescing in prevailing opinions he was sure of a livelihood, and had a line of promotion before him, but to become a heretic was danger and disgrace and in all probability death. America was not yet discovered, and travel was still travail. There was no foreign country to which he might emigrate unless after a long and painful pilgrimage on foot he was willing to be a wretched exile,

to live a lonely and precarious life in some Mohammedan or pagan land.

The heretic who stayed at home was excommunicated. All persons were forbidden to speak to him or to provide him with food or shelter, to buy from or sell to him, to employ him or accept employment from him. Nowadays excommunication is easily braved, but in the height of the power of the church it was a fearful punishment. The excommunicated man was a moral leper, a social outcast. His life, if he managed to live at all, was a burden to him. Of course, even then, there were courageous men who defied excommunication. Men who had physical force on their side sometimes braved spiritual and social terrors. Powerful nobles and great kings could fight on something like equal terms against bishops and popes, though the story of Henry's standing three winter days clad only in his shirt at the gates of Canossa begging for an audience in which he might prostrate himself at the Pope's feet and ask forgiveness is an impressive reminder of what an excommunication from the church once meant.

Kings were sometimes victors by force of arms, but what could a private scholar do against the power of the church? The church

had its own courts and police, and could arrest, imprison and sentence a refractory ecclesiastic without the aid of the secular authorities. The contumacious critic of the church was immured in a cloister cell, fed on bread and water and allowed the use of no books except manuals of devotion. Even an indiscreet defender of the church, who, like Bishop Pecock in his *Repressor*, a book written against the Lollards, made concessions to reason against authority, was likely to be condemned as was Pecock to such an imprisonment.

If a heretic had publicly promulgated his opinions and would not publicly recant them, the offender was sometimes excommunicated with bell, book and candle, a ceremony that tried the victim's own nerves and filled the public assembly with dread and horror. The church was at first brilliantly lighted with many candles, which were extinguished one by one as the service of condemnation proceeded. At last, when but one candle remained, the officiating priest pronounced the awful words: "Cursed be he from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. Out be he taken from the book of life, and as this candle is cast from the sight of men, so be his soul cast from the sight of

God into the deepest pit of hell. Amen." When the Bible had been shut as a sign that the poor heretic had no part in it, and the candle quenched as a sign that he was cast into outer darkness, the church bell was tolled as for a departed soul to indicate the sinner's eternal death.

When the condition of Europe during the Dark Ages is considered, it is no wonder that there was little organized opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity until the great revolt of the northern nations from Rome, known as the Reformation. The Reformation itself was not primarily caused by speculative or doctrinal questions. It was a revolt against the oppression, the greed and the corruption of the clergy, and the weapon of the reformers was the Bible recently translated into the various tongues of the North and made accessible to the multitude by the art of printing. Against the claim of the Popes to divine authority and infallible wisdom the reformers appealed to the Scriptures as the only infallible guide, and thus, in throwing off one yoke, they fixed another with almost equal firmness upon the necks of men. They got rid of many ecclesiastical errors and abuses, but in setting up the Bible as infallible they gave a new lease of life

to every error in the book and opposed new obstacles to scientific investigation.

In the tumultuous and terrible sixteenth century Catholics and Protestants vied with each other in sending heretics to the dungeon and the stake. Hundreds were burned to death before the battle for free thought was won. Even as late as 1611, the year the authorized version of the Bible was made and only nine years before the Mayflower took the Pilgrim Fathers to Plymouth, Bartholomew Leggatt and Edward Wightman were burned in England for denying the doctrine of the Trinity. Still, in spite of all opposition, Unitarian churches arose in Poland and Hungary, and many illustrious men, among whom are Milton, Locke and Newton, professed Arian opinions. But the authority of the Bible held the clergy and people of the English churches to the dual theory of the nature of Jesus which is legitimately deduced from its pages. There could be, and there can be, no thorough and consistent belief in the humanity of Jesus until the opinions of the writers of the New Testament are tested like those of other men by reason and observation, and one or the other of the two inconsistent biblical theories is rejected.

Through most of the seventeenth century the

law continued to deny religious liberty. When the arbitrary rule of Charles I. roused the Puritans to revolt, as the war proceeded sects multiplied. Though parliament was fighting against the king for its own liberty, it had no thought of granting liberty of conscience to the people. By a great majority it passed a statute against blasphemies and heresies which declares "any man denying the doctrine of the Trinity or that the books of Scripture are the Word of God . . . and refusing on trial to abjure his heresy shall suffer the pain of death."

In America the Cambridge Platform, made very soon after the Westminster Confession had been adopted by the English parliament, also declared that blasphemies and heresies were to be restrained and punished by the civil authorities.

In vain had been Cromwell's declaration, "In things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of right and reason," even when he enforced it by the appeal, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God to think it possible that you may be mistaken."

The death of Cromwell and the downfall of Puritanism increased the rigor of persecution. By stringent acts of uniformity dissenters were

harried and crushed, and thousands of them were thrown into prison. Tyranny, however, perished of its own folly and excess. A second revolution took place, and, in 1689, the Act of Toleration was passed, by which a large measure of religious "toleration," if not of equal justice, was secured.

Since that date the chief hindrances to the advance of a recognition of the true nature of Jesus and of his gospel have been those ancient and inveterate foes of every spiritual religion, viz., the sinfulness, the worldliness, the prejudice and the ignorance of men. To be saved by faith in the atonement of Christ is easier than to be saved by obeying his commands and imitating his example.

However, in spite of all obstacles, the truth is gradually winning its way. The doctrine of the humanity of Jesus is keeping pace step by step with every advance in public intelligence and virtue. In this country we are now a long way from the grossness of medieval superstition. Men no longer speak of God as dying on the cross, or swear by "God's wounds." It is only in the most ignorant and bigoted countries that regiments are called "The Division of the Mother of God," or "The Division of the Son of God," as was the case

with the army of Ecuador until 1875. No Protestant church would now condemn any one for refusing to call Mary the Mother of God, as Nestorius was condemned for doing by the council of Ephesus in 431.

The Roman theology, built on the ruin of an empire, venerable by its antiquity, sanctified by the blood of martyrs and adorned by the greatest masters of architecture, sculpture, painting and music is now rapidly decaying. It took a thousand years to build up the mighty edifice; and its massive walls, like the ruins of the Coliseum, may long defy the forces of time. The slighter systems of Luther and Calvin were built up more quickly and their collapse will be more rapid and complete. In the very church at Geneva in which Calvin once preached his narrow dogmas and cruel decrees, Unitarian congregations have now for fifty years listened to rational expositions of Scripture and to a gospel of good will. All the Protestant churches have softened and attenuated their theology. Of the doctrine of the Trinity, the crowning folly of orthodoxy, a twin absurdity with transubstantiation, there is now very rarely any attempted exposition or defense.

The deification of Jesus is the heart of the

church of Rome. One who accepts that protests illogically and vainly against the Papacy, Mariolatry and saint worship, for these are all legitimate outgrowths of the belief that Jesus is God.

The struggle for a genuine Christianity free from false philosophy and pagan error has been long and bitter, but the victory of truth and righteousness is drawing near. If it be asked why the advance of thought has been so slow and so painful, the only answer is that in the inscrutable, though, as faith believes, the beneficent, providence of God, man's intellectual and moral, as well as his physical, progress must be made "inch by painful inch." Every reformer in making every step in advance has done so in spite of "fears within and fightings without." The ignorant have opposed the dead weight of their stupidity, the selfish the active ingenuity of their ambition, the bigoted the fierce cruelty of their fanaticism against every social, political and moral reform; yet, in spite of all, knowledge and freedom have increased.

It is surprising how many facts that now seem obvious were unnoticed or unheeded for thousands of years. Countless generations of men have gazed at the stars, yet till

the sixteenth century not one man in a million had any true conception of astronomy, and when Galileo tried to expound the truth discovered by Copernicus he was forced by clerical persecutors to recant what an infallible Pontiff declared to be his errors. Since the beginning of the human race men have roamed over the earth's surface, yet geology is a nineteenth century science. Having eyes men saw not. They shivered and sighed for fuel while dwelling upon beds of anthracite coal. They sat in darkness or by rush lights when wells of illuminating oil were bubbling around them.

Ever since man learned to use fire, steam has wreathed itself before his stupid eyes, yet the force that now, guided by genius, does more work than all human muscles and all draught animals put together, was not utilized until the last century.

If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If in these cases men have failed to understand facts of the most practical concern which were continually forced upon their attention by their senses, is it surprising that they have been slow to learn abstract religious truths?

It took the ancestors of the more enlightened

nations of the world thousands of years to get rid of gross forms of idolatry. Even the Jews, the chosen people, the prophet nation, relapsed again and again into polytheism, offered sacrifices to Baal and worshiped images of a calf. "Every man is a quotation from all his ancestors." We are all descendants of hundreds of generations of pagans. The blood of the cave-dwellers who thought the thunderbolt the dart of an angry god is in our veins. Our nerves still tremble with the superstitions which made altars reek with blood to propitiate the vengeful deities who scourged men with famine and pestilence. And so we still have a fading theology that makes Christ a mediator between an angry God and a suffering race of men and his death an atoning sacrifice. But all this is passing away, and we are coming to understand the simple gospel of Jesus, the plain gospel of purity, love, and service. A righteous and useful life is the only condition of discipleship or of salvation ever imposed by Jesus, and the only one the modern Christian world cares much about.

Counting as we in our ignorance and impatience are accustomed to count, progress has been slow and difficult, and every one who struggles against ignorance, error and cruelty

echoes the pathetic wail of the ancient Psalmist, "How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself? . . . How long shall the wicked triumph?" But now "we know only in part." The time that seems to us so long is but an insignificant fragment of eternity, and the short struggle for truth and righteousness now will enrich and ennoble our lives through all the millenniums of the future.

We need to revise the scale of our thinking and take the measuring rod with which in the Apocalypse the temple of God was measured. We need to take the sublime chronology of the ancient poet who declared that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years." Christianity is yet in its early morning. The shadows of paganism still linger about it and obscure its brightness, the clouds of mythology still invest it in gaudy, unsubstantial splendors. But the shadows will fly and the scarlet tints will fade and the white and holy light of truth will fill the noon-day sky.

A mere caricature of Christianity, a medley of pagan superstitions, of worldly ambitions, of idle ceremonies, and of ascetic follies, has ruled a quarter of the world for a little while. Instead of it we expect that sooner or later a true Christianity will prevail, and that in all

lands wars and oppression will cease, all the resources of the earth will be developed to the utmost for the common good, and all men will live in ever-increasing wisdom, virtue and happiness. Such at least, as I understand it, is the vision that was in the mind of Jesus when he established the kingdom of God among men.

The ascription of divine powers and honors to Jesus was sincere and impressive in an early day when great men were commonly deified, but in our age of larger knowledge and of less vivid and riotous imagination Jesus is by these extravagant claims wounded almost unto the death in the house of his friends. The expression, "the only-begotten Son of God," robs Jesus of all real personality and power, just as the high-sounding titles of the Emperor of China, the Son of Heaven and Elder Brother of the sun and moon, exclude that unfortunate monarch from any active participation in government and make him a *roi faineant*, an idle figurehead, hardly better than a prisoner of state. So the exaggerated theological honors of Jesus take him away from the working brotherhood of men and surround him with frigid and remote grandeur. The doctrine of the Trinity is purely for show. It rouses no

enthusiasm, it makes no converts at home or abroad. It is an incubus upon the human Christ whom the world loves as the noblest son of our common Father. It is a tree that bears nothing but leaves. It gives barren eulogy for practical obedience. The decline of this spurious glory will be the beginning of a new epoch in the real power of the life of Jesus in the world. We are not, as some timid persons seem to think, looking upon the sunset of faith, but are witnessing the sunrise of an immeasurably more glorious day, a millennium in which religion will not be an affair of one day in seven in the church, but of every day and every place; in which men will not serve with lip and knee only, not say Lord, Lord, and neglect justice and mercy, but one in which the spirit of Christ will be carried into the every-day life, into all the industries, all the business and all the governments of the world.

THE END.

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